

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

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GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

CHAPTER XVI.

WITH my head full of George Barnwell, I was at first disposed to believe that *I* must have had some hand in the attack upon my sister, or at all events that as her near relation, popularly known to be under obligations to her, I was a more legitimate object of suspicion than any one else. But when, in the clearer light of next morning, I began to reconsider the matter and to hear it discussed around me on all sides, I took another view of the case, which was more reasonable.

Joe had been at the Three Jolly Bargemen, smoking his pipe, from a quarter after eight o'clock to a quarter before ten. While he was there, my sister had been seen standing at the kitchen door, and had exchanged Good Night with a farm-labourer going home. The man could not be more particular as to the time at which he saw her (he got into dense confusion when he tried to be), than that it must have been before nine. When Joe went home at five minutes before ten, he found her struck down on the floor, and promptly called in assistance. The fire had not then burnt unusually low, nor was the snuff of the candle very long; the candle, however, had been blown out.

Nothing had been taken away from any part of the house. Neither, beyond the blowing out of the candle—which stood on a table between the door and my sister, and was behind her when she stood facing the fire and was struck—was there any disarrangement of the kitchen, excepting such as she herself had made in falling and bleeding. But, there was one remarkable piece of evidence on the spot. She had been struck with something blunt and heavy on the head and spine; after the blows were dealt, something heavy had been thrown down at her with considerable violence as she lay on her face. And on the ground beside her, when Joe picked her up, was a convict's leg-iron which had been flung asunder.

Now, Joe, examining this iron with a smith's eye, declared it to have been filed asunder some time ago. The hue and cry going off to the Hulks, and people coming thence to examine the iron, Joe's opinion was corroborated. They did not undertake to say when it had left the prison-

ships to which it undoubtedly had once belonged; but they claimed to know for certain that that particular manacle had not been worn by either of two convicts who had escaped last night. Further, one of those two was already retaken, and had not freed himself of his iron.

Knowing what I knew, I set up an inference of my own here. I believed the iron to be my convict's iron—the iron I had seen and heard him filing at, on the marshes—but my mind did not accuse him of having put it to its latest use. For, I believed one of two other persons to have become possessed of it, and to have turned it to this cruel account. Either Orlick, or the strange man who had shown me the file.

Now, as to Orlick; he had gone to town exactly as he told us when we picked him up at the turnpike, he had been seen about town all the evening, he had been in divers companies in several public-houses, and he had come back with myself and Mr. Wopsle. There was nothing against him, save the quarrel; and my sister had quarrelled with him, and with everybody else about her, ten thousand times. As to the strange man; if he had come back for his two bank notes there could have been no dispute about them, because my sister was fully prepared to restore them. Besides, there had been no altercation; the assailant had come in so silently and suddenly that she had been felled before she could look round.

It was horrible to think that I had provided the weapon, however undesignedly, but I could hardly think otherwise. I suffered unspeakable trouble while I considered and reconsidered whether I should at last dissolve that spell of my childhood, and tell Joe all the story. For months afterwards, I every day settled the question finally in the negative, and reopened and reargued it next morning. The contention came, after all, to this;—the secret was such an old one now, had so grown into me and become a part of myself, that I could not tear it away. In addition to the dread that, having led up to so much mischief, it would be now more likely than ever to alienate Joe from me if he believed it, I had the further restraining dread that he would not believe it, but would assort it with the fabulous dogs and veal cutlets as a monstrous invention. However, I temporised with myself, of course—for, was I not wavering between right and wrong, when the thing is always done!—and resolved to make a full disclosure if I should see any such

new occasion as a new chance of helping in the discovery of the assailant.

The Constables, and the Bow-street men from London—for, this happened in the days of the extinct red waistcoated police—were about the house for a week or two, and did pretty much what I have heard and read of like authorities doing in other such cases. They took up several obviously wrong people, and they ran their heads very hard against wrong ideas, and persisted in trying to fit the circumstances to the ideas, instead of trying to extract ideas from the circumstances. Also, they stood about the door of the Jolly Bargemen, with knowing and reserved looks that filled the whole neighbourhood with admiration; and they had a mysterious manner of taking their drink, that was almost as good as taking the culprit. But not quite, for they never did it.

Long after these constitutional powers had dispersed, my sister lay very ill in bed. Her sight was disturbed, so that she saw objects multiplied, and grasped at visionary teacups and wine-glasses instead of the realities; her hearing was greatly impaired; her memory also; and her speech was unintelligible. When, at last, she came round so far as to be helped down stairs, it was still necessary to keep my slate always by her, that she might indicate in writing what she could not indicate in speech. As she was (very bad handwriting apart) a more than indifferent speller, and as Joe was a more than indifferent reader, extraordinary complications arose between them, which I was always called in to solve. The administration of mutton instead of medicine, the substitution of Tea for Joe, and the baker for bacon, were among the mildest of my own mistakes.

However, her temper was greatly improved, and she was patient. A tremulous uncertainty of the action of all her limbs soon became a part of her regular state, and afterwards, at intervals of two or three months, she would often put her hands to her head and would then remain for about a week at a time in some gloomy aberration of mind. We were at a loss to find a suitable attendant for her, until a circumstance happened conveniently to relieve us. Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt conquered a confirmed habit of living into which she had fallen, and Biddy became a part of our establishment.

It may have been about a month after my sister's reappearance in the kitchen, when Biddy came to us with a small speckled box containing the whole of her worldly effects, and became a blessing to the household. Above all, she was a blessing to Joe, for the dear old fellow was sadly cut up by the constant contemplation of the wreck of his wife, and had been accustomed, while attending on her of an evening, to turn to me every now and then and say, with his blue eyes moistened, "Such a fine figure of a woman as she once were, Pip!" Biddy instantly taking the cleverest charge of her as though she had studied her from infancy, Joe became able in some sort to appreciate the greater quiet of his life, and to get down to the Jolly Bargemen

now and then for a change that did him good. It was characteristic of the police people that they had all more or less suspected poor Joe (though he never knew it), and that they had to a man concurred in regarding him as one of the deepest spirits they had ever encountered.

Biddy's first triumph in her new office, was to solve a difficulty that had completely vanquished me. I had tried hard at it, but had made nothing of it. Thus it was:

Again and again and again, my sister had traced upon the slate a character that looked like a curious T, and then with the utmost eagerness had called our attention to it as something she particularly wanted. I had in vain tried everything producible that began with a T, from tar to toast and tub. At length it had come into my head that the sign looked like a hammer, and on my lustily calling that word in my sister's ear, she had begun to hammer on the table and had expressed a qualified assent. Thereupon, I had brought in all our hammers, one after another, but without avail. Then I bethought me of a crutch, the shape being much the same, and I borrowed one in the village, and displayed it to my sister with considerable confidence. But she shook her head to that extent when she was shown it, that we were terrified lest in her weak and shattered state she should dislocate her neck.

When my sister found that Biddy was very quick to understand her, this mysterious sign reappeared on the slate. Biddy looked thoughtfully at it, heard my explanation, looked thoughtfully at my sister, looked thoughtfully at Joe (who was always represented on the slate by his initial letter), and ran into the forge, followed low by Joe and me.

"Why, of course!" cried Biddy, with an exultant face. "Don't you see? It's *him!*"

Orlick, without a doubt! She had lost his name, and could only signify him by his hammer. We told him why we wanted him to come into the kitchen, and he slowly laid down his hammer, wiped his brow with his arm, took another wipe at it with his apron, and came slouching out, with a curious loose vagabond bend in the knees that strongly distinguished him.

I confess that I expected to see my sister denounce him, and that I was disappointed by the different result. She manifested the greatest anxiety to be on good terms with him, was evidently much pleased by his being at length produced, and motioned that she would have him given something to drink. She watched his countenance as if she were particularly wishful to be assured that he took kindly to his reception, she showed every possible desire to conciliate him, and there was an air of humble propitiation in all she did, such as I have seen pervade the bearing of a child towards a hard master. After that day, a day rarely passed without her drawing the hammer on her slate, and without Orlick's slouching in and standing doggedly before her, as if he knew no more than I did what to make of it.

CHAPTER XVII.

I now fell into a regular routine of apprenticeship-life, which was varied, beyond the limits of the village and the marshes, by no more remarkable circumstance than the arrival of my birthday and my paying another visit to Miss Havisham. I found Miss Sarah Pocket still on duty at the gate, I found Miss Havisham just as I had left her, and she spoke of Estella in the very same way, if not in the very same words. The interview lasted but a few minutes, and she gave me a guinea when I was going, and told me to come again on my next birthday. I may mention at once that this became an annual custom. I tried to decline taking the guinea on the first occasion, but with no better effect than causing her to ask me very angrily, if I expected more? Then, and after that, I took it.

So unchanging was the dull old house, the yellow light in the darkened room, the faded spectre in the chair by the dressing-table glass, that I felt as if the stopping of the clocks had stopped Time in that mysterious place, and, while I and everything else outside it grew older, it stood still. Daylight never entered the house as to my thoughts and remembrances of it, any more than as to the actual fact. It bewildered me, and under its influence I continued at heart to hate my trade and to be ashamed of home.

Imperceptibly I became conscious of a change in Biddy, however. Her shoes came up at the heel, her hair grew bright and neat, her hands were always clean. She was not beautiful—she was common, and could not be like Estella—but she was pleasant and wholesome and sweet-tempered. She had not been with us more than a year (I remember her being newly out of mourning at the time it struck me), when I observed to myself one evening that she had curiously thoughtful and attentive eyes; eyes that were very pretty and very good.

It came of my lifting up my own eyes from a task I was poring at—writing some passages from a book, to improve myself in two ways at once by a sort of stratagem—and seeing Biddy observant of what I was about. I laid down my pen, and Biddy stopped in her needle-work without laying it down.

"Biddy," said I, "how do you manage it? Either I am very stupid, or you are very clever."

"What is it that I manage? I don't know," returned Biddy, smiling.

She managed our whole domestic life, and wonderfully too; but I did not mean that, though that made what I did mean more surprising.

"How do you manage, Biddy?" said I, "to learn everything that I learn, and always to keep up with me?" I was beginning to be rather vain of my knowledge, for I spent my birthday guineas on it, and set aside the greater part of my pocket-money for similar investment; though I have no doubt, now, that the little I knew was extremely dear at the price.

"I might as well ask you," said Biddy, "how you manage?"

"No; because when I come in from the forge of a night, any one can see me turning to at it. But you never turn to at it, Biddy."

"I suppose I must catch it—like a cough," said Biddy, quietly; and went on with her sewing.

Pursuing my idea as I leaned back in my wooden chair and looked at Biddy sewing away with her head on one side, I began to think her rather an extraordinary girl. For, I called to mind now, that she was equally accomplished in the terms of our trade and the names of our different sorts of work, and our various tools. In short, whatever I knew, Biddy knew. Theoretically, she was already as good a blacksmith as I, or better.

"You are one of those, Biddy," said I, "who make the most of every chance. You never had a chance before you came here, and see how improved you are!"

Biddy looked at me for an instant, and went on with her sewing. "I was your first teacher though; wasn't I?" said she, as she sewed.

"Biddy!" I exclaimed, in amazement. "Why, you are crying!"

"No I am not," said Biddy, looking up and laughing. "What put that in your head?"

What could have put it in my head, but the glistening of a tear as it dropped on her work? I sat silent, recalling what a drudge she had been until Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt successfully overcame that bad habit of living, so highly desirable to be got rid of by some people. I recalled the hopeless circumstances by which she had been surrounded in the miserable little shop and the miserable little noisy evening school, with that miserable old bundle of incompetence always to be dragged and shouldered. I reflected that even in those untoward times there must have been latent in Biddy what was now developing, for, in my first uneasiness and discontent I had turned to her for help, as a matter of course. Biddy sat quietly sewing, shedding no more tears, and while I looked at her and thought about it all, it occurred to me that perhaps I had not been sufficiently grateful to Biddy. I might have been too reserved, and should have patronised her more (though I did not use that precise word in my meditations), with my confidence.

"Yes, Biddy," I observed, when I had done turning it over, "you were my first teacher, and that at a time when we little thought of ever being together like this, in this kitchen."

"Ah, poor thing!" replied Biddy. It was like her self-forgetfulness, to transfer the remark to my sister, and to get up and be busy about her, making her more comfortable; "that's sadly true!"

"Well!" said I, "we must talk together a little more, as we used to do. And I must consult you a little more, as I used to do. Let us have a quiet walk on the marshes next Sunday, Biddy, and a long chat."

My sister was never left alone now; but Joe

more than readily undertook the care of her on that Sunday afternoon, and Biddy and I went out together. It was summer time and lovely weather. When we had passed the village and the church and the churchyard, and were out on the marshes and began to see the sails of the ships as they sailed on, I began to combine Miss Havisham and Estella with the prospect, in my usual way. When we came to the river-side and sat down on the bank, with the water rippling at our feet, making it all more quiet than it would have been without that sound, I resolved that it was a good time and place for the admission of Biddy into my inner confidence.

"Biddy," said I, after binding her to secrecy, "I want to be a gentleman."

"Oh, I wouldn't, if I was you!" she returned. "I don't think it would answer."

"Biddy," said I, with some severity, "I have particular reasons for wanting to be a gentleman."

"You know best, Pip; but don't you think you are happier as you are?"

"Biddy," I exclaimed, impatiently, "I am not at all happy as I am. I am disgusted with my calling and with my life. I have never taken to either, since I was bound. Don't be absurd."

"Was I absurd?" said Biddy, quietly raising her eyebrows; "I am sorry for that; I didn't mean to be. I only want you to do well, and to be comfortable."

"Well then, understand once for all that I never shall or can be comfortable—or anything but miserable—there, Biddy!—unless I can lead a very different sort of life from the life I lead now."

"That's a pity!" said Biddy, shaking her head with a sorrowful air.

Now, I too had so often thought it a pity, that, in the singular kind of quarrel with myself which I was always carrying on, I was half inclined to shed tears of vexation and distress when Biddy gave utterance to her sentiment and my own. I told her she was right, and I knew it was much to be regretted, but still it was not to be helped.

"If I could have settled down," I said to Biddy, plucking up the short grass within reach, much as I had once upon a time pulled my feelings out of my hair and kicked them into the brewery wall: "if I could have settled down and been but half as fond of the forge as I was when I was little, I know it would have been much better for me. You and I and Joe would have wanted nothing then, and Joe and I would perhaps have gone partners when I was out of my time, and I might even have grown up to keep company with you, and we might have sat on this very bank on a fine Sunday, quite different people. I should have been good enough for *you*; shouldn't I, Biddy?"

Biddy sighed as she looked at the ships sailing on, and returned for answer, "Yes; I am not over particular." It scarcely sounded flattering, but I knew she meant well.

"Instead of that," said I, plucking up more grass and chewing a blade or two, "see how I am going on. Dissatisfied, and uncomfortable, and—what would it signify to me, being coarse and common, if nobody had told me so!"

Biddy turned her face suddenly towards mine, and looked far more attentively at me than she had looked at the sailing ships.

"It was neither a very true nor a very polite thing to say," she remarked, directing her eyes to the ships again. "Who said it?"

I was disconcerted, for I had broken away without quite seeing where I was going. It was not to be shuffled off now, however, and I answered, "The beautiful young lady at Miss Havisham's, and she's more beautiful than anybody ever was, and I admire her dreadfully, and I want to be a gentleman on her account." Having made this lunatic confession, I began to throw my torn-up grass into the river, as if I had some thoughts of following it.

"Do you want to be a gentleman, to spite her or to gain her over?" Biddy quietly asked me, after a pause.

"I don't know," I moodily answered.

"Because, if it is to spite her," Biddy pursued, "I should think—but you know best—that might be better and more independently done by caring nothing for her words. And if it is to gain her over, I should think—but you know best—she was not worth gaining over."

Exactly what I myself had thought, many times. Exactly what was perfectly manifest to me at the moment. But how could I, a poor dazed village lad, avoid that wonderful inconsistency into which the best and wisest of men fall every day?

"It may be all quite true," said I to Biddy, "but I admire her dreadfully."

In short, I turned over on my face when I came to that, and got a good grasp on the hair on each side of my head, and wrenched it well. All the while knowing the madness of my heart to be so very mad and misplaced, that I was quite conscious it would have served my face right, if I had lifted it up by my hair, and knocked it against the pebbles as a punishment for belonging to such an idiot.

Biddy was the wisest of girls, and she tried to reason no more with me. She put her hand, which was a comfortable hand though roughened by work, upon my hands, one after another, and gently took them out of my hair. Then she softly patted my shoulder in a soothing way, while with my face upon my sleeve I cried a little—exactly as I had done in the brewery yard—and felt vaguely convinced that I was very much ill used by somebody, or by everybody; I can't say which.

"I am glad of one thing," said Biddy, "and that is, that you have felt you could give me your confidence, Pip. And I am glad of another thing, and that is, that of course you know you may depend upon my keeping it and always so far deserving it. If your first teacher (dear! such a poor one, and so much in need of being taught herself!) had been your teacher at

the present time, she thinks she knows what lesson she would set. But it would be a hard one to learn, and you have got beyond her, and it's of no use now." So, with a quiet sigh for me, Biddy rose from the bank, and said, with a fresh and pleasant change of voice, " Shall we walk a little further, or go home?"

" Biddy," I cried, getting up, putting my arm round her neck, and giving her a kiss, " I shall always tell you everything."

" Till you're a gentleman," said Biddy.

" You know I never shall be, so that's always. Not that I have any occasion to tell you anything, for you know everything I know—as I told you at home the other night."

" Ah!" said Biddy, quite in a whisper, as she looked away at the ships. And then repeated, with her former pleasant change; " shall we walk a little further, or go home?"

I said to Biddy we would walk a little further, and we did so, and the summer afternoon toned down into the summer evening, and it was very beautiful. I began to consider whether I was not more naturally and wholesomely situated, after all, in these circumstances, than playing beggar my neighbour by candlelight in the room with the stopped clocks, and being despised by Estella. I thought it would be very good for me if I could get her out of my head, with all the rest of those remembrances and fancies, and could go to work determined to relish what I had to do, and stick to it, and make the best of it. I asked myself the question whether I did not surely know that if Estella were beside me at that moment instead of Biddy, she would make me miserable? I was obliged to admit that I did know it for a certainty, and I said to myself, " Pip, what a fool you are!"

We talked a good deal as we walked, and all that Biddy said seemed right. Biddy was never insulting, or capricious, or Biddy to-day and somebody else to-morrow; she would have derived only pain, and no pleasure, from giving me pain; she would far rather have wounded her own breast than mine. How could it be then, that I did not like her much the better of the two?

" Biddy," said I, when we were walking homeward, " I wish you could put me right."

" I wish I could!" said Biddy.

" If I could only get myself to fall in love with you—you don't mind my speaking so openly to such an old acquaintance?"

" Oh dear, not at all!" said Biddy. " Don't mind me."

" If I could only get myself to do it, *that* would be the thing for me."

" But you never will, you see," said Biddy.

It did not appear quite so unlikely to me that evening, as it would have done if we had discussed it a few hours before. I therefore observed I was not quite sure of that. But Biddy said she *was*, and she said it decisively. In my heart I believed her to be right; and yet I took it rather ill, too, that she should be so positive on the point.

When we came near the churchyard, we had

to cross an embankment, and get over a stile near a sluice-gate. There started up, from the gate, or from the rushes, or from the ooze (which was quite in his stagnant way), old Orlick.

" Halloa!" he growled, " where are you two going?"

" Where should we be going, but home? " Well then," said he, " I'm jiggered if I don't see you home!"

This penalty of being jiggered was a favourite supposititious case of his. He attached no definite meaning to the word that I am aware of, but used it, like his own pretended christian name, to affront mankind, and convey an idea of something savagely damaging. When I was younger, I had had a general belief that if he had jiggered me personally, he would have done it with a sharp and twisted hook.

Biddy was much against his going with us, and said to me in a whisper, " Don't let him come; I don't like him." As I did not like him either, I took the liberty of saying that we thanked him but we didn't want seeing home. He received that piece of information with a yell of laughter, and dropped back, but came slouching after us at a little distance.

Curious to know whether Biddy suspected him of having had a hand in that murderous attack of which my sister had never been able to give any account, I asked her why she did not like him?

" Oh!" she replied, glancing over her shoulder as he slouched after us, " because I—I am afraid he likes me."

" Did he ever tell you he liked you?" I asked, indignantly.

" No," said Biddy, glancing over her shoulder again, " he never told me so; but he dances at me, whenever he can catch my eye."

However novel and peculiar this testimony of attachment, I did not doubt the accuracy of the interpretation. I was very hot indeed upon old Orlick's daring to admire her; as hot as if it were an outrage on myself.

" But it makes no difference to you, you know," said Biddy, calmly.

" No, Biddy, it makes no difference to me; only I don't like it; I don't approve of it."

" Nor I neither," said Biddy. " Though *that* makes no difference to you."

" Exactly," said I; " but I must tell you I should have no opinion of you, Biddy, if he danced at you with your own consent."

I kept an eye on Orlick after that night, and, whenever circumstances were favourable to his dancing at Biddy, got before him, to obscure that demonstration. He had struck root in Joe's establishment, by reason of my sister's sudden fancy for him, or I should have tried to get him dismissed. He quite understood and reciprocated my good intentions, as I had reason to know thereafter.

And now, because my mind was not confused enough before, I complicated its confusion fifty thousand-fold, by having states and seasons when I was clear that Biddy was immeasurably

better than Estella, and that the plain honest working life to which I was born, had nothing in it to be ashamed of, but offered me sufficient means of self-respect and happiness. At those times, I would decide conclusively that my disaffection to dear old Joe and the forge was gone, and that I was growing up in a fair way to be partners with Joe and to keep company with Biddy—when all in a moment some confounding remembrance of the Havisham days would fall upon me, like a destructive missile, and scatter my wits again. Scattered wits take a long time picking up; and often, before I had got them well together, they would be dispersed in all directions by one stray thought, that perhaps after all Miss Havisham was going to make my fortune when my time was out.

If my time had run out, it would have left me still at the height of my perplexities, I dare say. It never did run out, however, but was brought to a premature end, as I proceed to relate.

IN PRAISE OF BEARS.

"WHY do your dogs bark so? Be there bears i' the town?" asks simple Slender of sweet Anne Page; and the damsels, with a sly glance, replies, "I think they are, sir; I heard them talked of." Upon which, Master Shallow's shallower cousin dilates on the sport of bear-baiting, and, when he thinks he has sufficiently terrified his fair listener by the boastful avowal of having taken Sackerson by the chain, he apologises for woman's fear by saying that bears are "very ill-favoured rough things," and that her sex, indeed, "cannot abide 'em." Master Slender's statement is not altogether true. Rough they are—there is no doubt of it; ill-favoured—well, that is a matter of opinion, for there are many uglier creatures that ladies admire; and as for being held by womankind in such extreme aversion, it will be shown, by-and-by, that, at all events, the rule has its exceptions.

We will first exhibit our Bear in a state of nature; and, although we shall have many things to record of him which seem to indicate an in-born ferocity, it will nevertheless be found that if he gets fair play—that is, plenty to eat, and is let alone—your Bear is not a bit worse than any other irritable gentleman of your acquaintance. Keep an alderman on bread-and-water for a week, and then prod him frequently with a pointed stick; depend upon it, the word "Bear" will be but a mild epithet by which to characterise him. All the authorities agree in declaring that nearly the whole of the Ursidæ—in fact, the Grizzly Bear ("Ursus ferox," and, therefore, well named) is the only exception—refrain from attacking man, or even the lower animals, unless impelled to do so by excess of hunger, to show fight when provoked being quite another thing. "The Brown Bear," says the Rev. Mr. Wood, "is not so formidable a foe to cattle and flocks as might be supposed from the

strength, courage, and voracity of the animal, as it has been often known to live for years in the near vicinity of farms without making any incursions upon the live stock. Fortunately for the farmers and cattle owners of Northern Europe, the Brown Bear is chiefly indebted for his food to roots and vegetable substances, or the sheds and folds would soon be depopulated. As a general fact, the Bear does not trouble itself to pursue the cattle, and in many cases owes its taste for blood to the absurd conduct of the cattle, which are apt to bellow and charge at the Bear as soon as it makes its appearance." (Who amongst ourselves submits to be belloved at, except a candidate on the hustings? Who likes to be charged—or over-charged?) "The Bear is then provoked to retaliation, and in so doing, learns a taste for blood, which never afterwards deserts it." So that, you see, it is not naturally the inclination of the Bear to eat even beef, much less to behave like a cannibal; whereas, we mankind hunt up and devour everything that is edible, without the slightest provocation on the part of the food, and Bears themselves are included amongst our articles of diet; witness the following, one of many statements of the same kind illustrative of the fact: "The flesh of the Bear is held in high esteem among the colonists and native hunters, and when properly prepared is considered a great delicacy by the denizens of civilised localities. The hams, when cured after the approved recipe, are greatly esteemed by epicures. The Brown Bear of Europe is also famed for the excellent quality of the meat which it furnishes." To show the voracity of man, as a set-off against that of the Bear, no time nor season avails with the former to keep him from bear's flesh, if he be so minded. Hearne, in his Journey to the Northern Ocean (1769-1772), says that the flesh of the brown bear is "abominable" during the period when fruit is scarce, and they are obliged to feed on insects; yet, even though it taste like carrion, men are found to relish it. Hearne, who evidently spoke from personal experience, immediately adds, that "in the middle of July, when the fruit is ripe, they are excellent eating." And in another place he remarks of the Polar Bear, who, at the worst, is only a fish-eater, having no choice but to be one, that their flesh "is not unpleasant eating, and the young cubs in the spring are rather delicate than otherwise." Of the Black Bear, too, we learn from another northern traveller, that "the liver is said to be a peculiar luxury when dressed on skewers, kibob fashion, with alternate slices of fat." Bear's liver, however, though it may rival in flavour the liver of Strasburg geese, cannot always be eaten with impunity. One of the old Arctic voyagers relates: "Having killed a Beare we drest her liver and ate it, which in the taste liked us well, but it made us all sick, specially three that were exceedingly sick, and we verily thought we should have lost them, for all their skins came off, from the foot to the head, but yet they recovered againe." Bears, then, in

the matter of carnivorous indulgence, are quite as much sinned against as sinning.

On the other hand, what Bears prefer to make their meals upon, before their tastes are vitiated, is of a truly hermit-like character. Here is the beau-ideal of a Bear's banquet, as described by Mr. Lloyd, of Scandinavian fame : "The Bear feeds on roots, and the leaves and small limbs of the aspen, mountain-ash, and other trees; he is also fond of succulent plants such as angelica and mountain thistle. To berries he is likewise very partial, and during the autumn months, when they are ripe, he devours vast quantities of cranberries, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, cloudberies, and other berries common to the Scandinavian forests." All this is innocent enough: we have seen schoolboys suck angelica when candied, and young ladies eat "vast quantities" of raspberries and strawberries, and never thought of accusing them of excess. What follows, however, is perhaps a little out of the way, but then, consider the temptation! "Ripe corn he also eats, and sometimes commits no small havoc amongst it, for seating himself, as it is said, on his haunches in a field of it, he collects with his outstretched arms nearly a sheaf of it at a time, the ears of which he then devours." The Bear thus spoken of is the Brown Bear of Northern Europe; but all the other members of his family—always excepting the Grizzly sort—are equally vegetarians. The Musquaw, or Black Bear of North America, will restrict himself to a vegetable diet unless pressed by hunger. A very pardonable exception is made by him in favour of the little snails which come up to feed on the sweet prairie grass, delicious eating, no doubt; as pleasant as the fawn-coloured snail, that is gathered in such quantities in the Limousin, and eaten with so much zest by the Parisians! The Syrian Bear delights in the chick-pea; the Sun-Bear of Thibet goes in for mangoes; the Bruang of Malay, also a Sun-Bear, finds nothing so delectable as the tender shoots of the cocoa-nut trees; the Bornean Bruang prefers the ripe fruit itself, and is able to account for, or give a good account of, the milk in the cocoa-nut, of which he is extremely fond; and so on of the rest, none of them taking to animal food unless fruit or vegetables be not procurable. But of all the good things the gods have provided, that in which the Bear most delights, to him the most toothsome dainty in existence, is honey. There is nothing a Bear will not do to get at honey. What jam is to children, honey is to bears. Given a tree all but inaccessible, in which the bees have deposited their saccharine store, and up climbs the bear in search of the thing he loves. "Few trees," says Mr. Wood, "afford so unstable a footing, that the Black Bear will not surmount them in order to reach a nest of wild bees, and there are few obstacles which his ready claws and teeth will not remove in order to enable him to reach the subjacent dainty. Even if the honey and comb be deeply concealed in the hollow of a tree, and the entrances by which the

bees find ingress and egress to and from their habitation be too small for the insertion of a paw, the Bear will set steadily to work with his teeth, and deliberately gnaw his way through the solid wood until he has made a breach sufficiently wide to improve his purpose. When once he has succeeded in bringing the comb to light, he scrapes them together with his fore paws and devours comb, honey, and young, without troubling himself about the stings of the surviving bees." Pliny asserts that Bears have a motive for eating honey, besides the actual pleasure it affords: "Subject they are many times to dimness of sight, for which cause especially they seek after honeycombs, that the bees might settle upon them, and with their stings make them bleed about the head, and by that means discharge them of the heaviness which troubleth their eyes." But the Bear, however pertinacious, does not always succeed in his quest after honey. Barthélemy de Glanvil, who compiled a work on natural history in the fourteenth century, called "*La Propriété des Bestes*," in which he followed, but not always closely, Aristotle and Pliny, gives the following amusing account of the way the Bear hunters of olden time used to bag their game. It illustrates two points in the Bear's character: his fondness for honey and his proneness to anger when he thinks himself injured. "The Bears," says Glanvil, "climb up trees where bees have deposited their honey, in deserts or other places which they frequent, where they know that honey will be found and where the bees abide. And when the Bear scents the honey he makes a hole in the tree with his claws and gets out the honey and eats it; and, when the hunter finds that the Bear is in the habit of coming there, he plants a number of strong sharp stakes, with the points uppermost, at the foot of the tree, and fixes a heavy mallet in the hole, attached by a cord from above, so that it rises and falls and strikes the Bear heavy blows on the head, hurting him to great anger. In his eagerness and ire the Bear redoubles his efforts to get at the honey, and, the more he tries, the oftener he is struck on the head. This strange warfare continues between the mallet and the Bear, till the beast becomes weary and dizzy, for his head is but weak. Through this dizziness he falls from the tree and drops upon the pointed stakes which transfix and kill him. And this is the manner of taking Bears." To be weak in the head is a recognised failing of the Ursine race. In Tom Cribb's "*Memorial to Congress*," where the Emperor of Russia figures in theistic duel with the Prince Regent of England, as "Long Sandy the Bear," the poet says :

Georgy tried for his customer's head,

The part 'bout Long Sandy that's softest 'tis said.
The earliest authority on this point is Pliny, who tells us that "Bears of all others have the tenderest scull."

The preceding account may be said to exhibit the mild, the sweet side of the Bear's disposition, before he is subjected to man,

and taught those accomplishments which make him, without contradiction, a most entertaining member of society. To be strictly just, however, we must present the Bear in his rougher mood; and nowhere do we find him "coming it so strong" as in the accounts which are given of him by the early Arctic navigators, who, by the way, like all sailors, have a great propensity to give him the designation, if not the propensities, of the fair sex. Some of the most graphic of these are related in the Navigation of William Barents, made in anno 1595, behind Norway, Muscovia, and Tartaria, the writer of which was Gerat de Veer. "The sixth of September, some of our men went on shoare upon the firm land to seek for stones, which are a kind of diamond, whereof there are many also in States Iland; and while they were seeking the stones, two of our men lying together in one place, a great leane white Beare came suddenly stealing out, and caught one of them suddenly faste by the necke, who, not knowing what it was that tooke him by the necke, cryed out and sayd, 'Who is that that pulls me so by the necke?' Wherwith the other that lay not farre from him lifted up his head to see who it was, and perceiving it to be a monstrous Beare, cryed out and sayd, 'Oh, mate! it is a Beare!' and therwith presently rose up and ranne away. The Beare, at the first falling upon the man, bit his head in sunder, and suckt out his blood, wherwith the rest of the men that were on the land, being about twentie in number, ranne presently thither, either to recover the man or else to drive the Beare from the dead body; and having charged their Pieces and bent their Pikes, set upon her, that was still devouring the man, but perceiving them to come towards her, fiercely and cruelly ranne at them, and got another of them out from the Companie, which she tore in pieces, wherwith all the rest ranne away. We perceiving out of our Ship and Pinasse, that our men ranne to the Sea-side to save themselves, with all speed entered into our Boates, and rowed as fast as we could to the shoare to relieve our men. Where being on Land, we beheld the eruell spectacle of our two dead men, that had beene so cruelly killed and torn to pieces by the Beare, wee seeing that, incouraged our men to goe backe againe with us, and with Pieces, Curtelasses, and Halfe-pikes, to set upon the Beare, but they would not all agree therunto: some of them saying, our men are already dead, and we shall get the Beare well enough though we expose not ourselves into so open danger; if wee might save our fellowes lives, then would wee make haste, but nowe wee need not make such speed, but take her at an advantage, with most securitie for ourselves, for we have to doe with a eruell, fierce, and ravenous Beast. Wherupon three of our men went forward, the Beare still devouring her prey, not even fearing the number of our men, and yet they were thirtie at the least. The three that went forward in that sort, were Cornelius Jackson, Master of William Barents' ship, William Gysen, Pylot of the Pinasse, and

Hans van Rusler, William Barents' purser; and after that the sayd Master and Pylot had shot three times and mist, the Purser stepping somewhat further forward, and seeing the Beare to be within length of a shot, presently levelled his Piece, and discharging it at the Beare, shot her into the head betweene both the eyes, and yet she held the man still fast by the necke, and lifted up her head with the man in her mouth, but she began somewhat to stagger, wherwith the Purser and a Scottish-man drew out their Curtelasses, and strooke at her so hard that their Curtelasses burst, and yet she would not leave the man; at last William Geysen went to them, and with all his might strooke the Beare upon the snout with his Piece, at which time the Beare fell to the ground, making a great noyse, and William Geysen leaping upon her cut her throat. The seventh of September we buried the dead bodies of our men in the State Iland, and having flayed the Beare, conveyed the skinne to Amsterdam."

In a chapter on the auxiliary verbs, Tristram Shandy asks: "If I should see a white bear, what should I say?" What Barents' sailors did, when they saw a white bear, on their voyage northward, to the kingdoms of Cathaia and China, in the year 1596, when in latitude 74° 30' N., was as follows: "The twelfth of June, in the morning, we saw a white Beare, which we rowed after with our Boate, thinking to cast a rope about her necke; but when we were neare her she was so great that we durst not doe it, but rowed back again to our Ship, to fetch more men and our Armes, and so made to her again with Muskets, Harquebusses, Halberts, and Hatchets, Johne Cornelison's men comming also with their Boate to helpe us; and so being well furnished of men and weapons, we rowed with both our Boates unto the Beare, and fought with her while fourre Glasses were runne out, for our weapons could doe her little hurt; and amongst the rest of the blowes that we gave her, one of our men strooke her into the backe with an Axe, which stuck fast in her backe, and yet she swamme away with it, but we rowed after her, and at last we cut her head in sunder with an Axe, wherwith she dyed; and then we brought her into John Cornelison's ship, where we flayed her, and found her skin to be twelve foot long; which done, we eate some of her flesh; but we brookt it not well. This Iland we called the Beare-island." In a still higher latitude (79° 30') they killed a second she bear, thirteen feet long. In another place, a party of eight men (they always had numbers in their favour) came suddenly upon two Bears, when they were without weapons, "wherupon the Beares rose up upon their hinder feet to see us (for they can smell further than they can see); and for that they smelt us, therefore they rose upright and came towards us, wherwith we were not a little abashed, in such sort that we had little lust to laugh, and in all haste went to our Boates again, still looking behind us, to see if they followed us." The adventures of these jolly tars,

who knew how to cut and run when it was necessary, abound in scrimmages with the Ursidae of the frozen regions. Here is another yarn: While waiting, frozen up, in Nova Zembla, on the fifteenth of September, "as one of our men held watch, we saw three Beares, whereof the one lay still behind a piece of ice, the other two came close to the ship; which wee perceiving, made our pieces ready to shoot at them, at which time there stood a Tub full of Beefe upon the ice, which lay in the water to be seasoned, for that close by the ship there was no water. One of the Beares went into it, and put his head in to take out a piece of the Beefe, but she fared therewith as the Dog did with the Pudding, for as she was snatching at the Beefe, she was shot into the head, wherwith she fell down dead and never stirred; the other Beare stood still, and looked upon her fellow, and when she had stood a good while she smelt her fellow, and perceiv-
ing that she was dead she ranne away, but wee tooke Halberts and other Armes with us, and followed her, and at last she came again towards us, and we prepared ourselves to withstand her, wherwith she rose up upon her hinder feet, thinking to rampe at us, but while she reared herself up, one of our men shot her into the bellie, and with that she fell upon her fore feet againe, and roaring as loud as she could, ranne away" (having had a bellyful). "Then we tooke the dead Beare and ript her bellie open; and taking out her guts, we set her upon her fore feet, that so she might freeze as she stood, intending to carry her with us into Holland, if wee might get our ship loose." They passed the whole winter fighting with the Bears. The last of these conflicts which we shall cite is the following: "The sixt (April, 1595), it was still foule weather, with a stiff North-west wind; that night there came a Beare to our house, and wee did the best we could to shoot at her, but because it was moist weather and the cocke foisty, our Piece would not give fire, wherwith the Beare came boldly toward the house, and came downe the stairs close to the doore, seeking to breake into the house, but our Master held the doore fast to, and being in great haste and feare, could not barre it with the piece of wood that he used thereunto; but the Beare seeing that the doore was shut, shee went backe againe, and within two houres after shee came againe, and went round about and upon the top of the house, and made such a roaring that it was fearefull to heare, and at last got to the chimney, and made such worke there that we thought she would have broken it downe, and tore the stye that was made fast about it in many pieces, with a great and fearefull noise, and but that it was night we made no resistance against her, because we could not see her. At last she went away and left us."

In all these instances, save the first—and perhaps the fact of a She-Bear putting her arm round a man's neck may be considered a playful demonstration—who were the aggressors? Not the Bears, but the men. "With a few rare exceptions," observes Mr. Wood, "the

Bears are singularly harmless animals when understood. When, however, they do make an attack, or are provoked to rigorous self-defence, they are, as has been seen, very dangerous customers." "The paws of the Bears," says the same authority, and you may fancy what potency there is in paws eighteen inches long, and five out of the eighteen devoted entirely to claws—we are speaking of the Grizzly Bear, the most formidable of any—"the paws of the Bears are armed with long and sharp talons, which are not capable of retraction, but which are most efficient weapons of offence when urged by the powerful muscles which give force to the Bear's limbs. Should the adversary contrive to elude the quick and heavy blows of the paw, the Bear endeavours to seize the foe round the body, and by dint of sheer pressure to overcome its enemy." Bruin exhibits, moreover, all the skill of a prize-fighter. "In guarding itself from the blows that are aimed at it by its adversary, the Bear is singularly adroit, warding off the fiercest strokes with a dexterity that might be envied by many a pretender to the pugilistic art." He also knows how to "punish," or "mill" his adversary: "With fearful ingenuity, the Bear, when engaged with a human foe, directs its attack upon the head of its antagonist, and if one of its powerful strokes should take effect, has been known to strike the entire scalp from the head at a single blow. Mr. Lloyd, who had the great misfortune to be struck down by a Bear, and the singular good fortune to escape from its fangs, says that when he was lying on the ground" (not a fair stand-up fight, however), "at the mercy of the angry beast, the animal, after biting him upon the arms and legs, deliberately settled itself upon his head, and began to scarify it in the most business-like manner, leaving wounds of eight and nine inches in length." It follows from all these stories that the rule to be observed by a traveller in Ursine regions is neither to assault nor insult a Bear, who, if treated like a gentleman, will behave as such. As to assaulting him, it is not every one who gets off so easily as the old lady of whom Mr. Atkinson, in his valuable work on Siberia, relates the following anecdote: It appears that she had lost her donkey, and, "after a long and fatiguing search, came at last on the missing animal. Being very much irritated with the truant for his misconduct, she fell to scolding and beating him with the handle of a broom which she happened to be carrying. Her vituperation and castigation were, however, suddenly checked by the discovery that the animal she was beating so unceremoniously was not her donkey, but a great Brown Bear. The astonishment of the two seems to have been mutual, for the Bear was evidently as much confused by the unwarrantable assault as was the woman by the sight of the animal she was belabouring; so that after looking at each other for a few moments, the Bear turned tail and ran away as fast as his legs could carry him." This mistake reminds us of one, of the gentleman who made a long stage-coach journey by night with

only another companion, a fellow wrapped up in a thick great-coat, who refused to answer a single question that was put to him, and otherwise conducted himself in a very surly, unsocial manner : daylight revealed to him that the misanthrope was a Bear ! The creature, however, except by its silence, had given its fellow-traveller no offence, and this brings us to the question of the temper and disposition of the Bear, reclaimed from the condition "when wild in woods the hairy savage ran."

Of the docility of the Bear, there are a thousand instances on record ; indeed, one has only to go to any country fair, to see him made the showman's plaything—like Samson, he is brought out to make sport for the Philistines. Nature has enabled the huge Plantigrade to stand upright, and Art has been called in to improve upon Nature. Your well-taught Bear can shuffle you a saraband, or whirl you a waltz with as clumsy a grace as any of the rustics who grin and gaze at him. As a member of the corps de ballet, he may hold up his head, or his leg, anywhere ; as a singer, I fear he would prove a failure. Yet the family voice is not without flexibility, and M. Agassiz has so far assimilated the cries of animals to human tongues, as to affirm that it would be easy to derive the growling of different species of Bears one from the other, in the same way and by the same process, that linguists resort to demonstrate the relation which exists between Greek and Sanscrit. Careful and earnest teaching might, therefore, improve the growl of the Bear till it equalled double-bass ; indeed, we have heard some bassi whose lower notes might easily have been mistaken for the untutored utterance of a Bear. But Bruin's docility is more agreeably exemplified in the facility with which he adapts himself to the circumstances of domestic life. Lord Byron's Bear was not a bad specimen of what may be achieved by a classical education, and it is said that this Bear's manners contrasted, not unfavourably, with those of the Dons of Trinity. Tiglath Pileser, familiarly called "Tig," was a Bear of whom the University of Oxford was justly proud : he wore a regulation cap and gown, became them as well, and conducted him self with as much propriety as most undergraduates. Tig never "spotted the oak" to keep out clamorous creditors ; nor is it on record that he gave wine-parties or got drunk. To drink wine is, however, afeat which the Bear can accomplish ; for Sir Stamford Raffles, when in Ceylon, had one, a Malayan Bruang, who addicted himself to champagne, and would taste no other fermented liquor—wherein he displayed much judgment. Mr. Lloyd, the Norwegian traveller, owned a brace of Brown Bears, which he had tamed when young, and as they grew up they became the most gamesome and, as it were, larkish of animals ; if he closed the door against their importunity, for they were never easy out of his company, they would make a forcible entry by the window. How gentle the Bear can behave, is shown in a story told of a

Siberian Brown Bear, by Mr. Atkinson : "Two children," he says, "of four and six years of age, had wandered away from their home, and were a little time after missed by their parents, who set out in search of them. To their horror and astonishment they found their children engaged in play with a large Bear, which responded to their infantine advances in a most affectionate manner. One of the children was feeding its shaggy playfellow with fruit, while the other had mounted on its back, and was seated on its strange steed strong in the fearlessness of childish ignorance. The parents gave a terrified scream on seeing the danger to which their offspring were exposed, and the Bear, on seeing their approach, quietly turned away and went into the forest." The negroes in the West Indies say of the monkeys that they are too cunning to talk, knowing that if they did they would inevitably be set to work. Bears, with all their cultivation, are not so shrewd, or they would not have submitted without growling to the tasks imposed upon them by the Indians on Lake Champlain, who—the period is A.D. 1611—"have tame Beares, which they teach to carry them upon trees for want of ladders." This statement is made on the authority of M. de Monts, who undertook a voyage and journey of exploration with the object of piercing through North America by the river of Canada, "which the savages call Kebee," to be able to reach one day to China.

From these few instances, adduced almost at random, it has been shown that the Bear is capable of developing as many good qualities as are generally to be met with in society. Without absolutely acceding to the doctrine, which is variously held, that animals have souls, but leaving it an open question for philosophy—when wise enough—to determine, we quite agree with M. Quatrefages, of the French Academy of Sciences, in thinking that they express "something" ("quelque chose") which is "fundamentally characteristic." We understand by this definition a capacity for feeling and for expressing feeling in a way that assimilates more or less nearly to reasoning, according to the animal's natural endowments, many of them possessing far higher qualities than others. That Goethe entertained this idea, or chose to entertain it, is apparent from the zest he has shown in describing a Bear in love, and his description is so amusing, that we cannot do better than give, in English prose, the substance of the great German poet's characteristic verse. The title of his poem is Lili's Park. Lili, a beautiful young girl, the mistress of a Zoological Garden, filled with the rarest creatures. Who the narrator is appears in the course of the narrative, which runs thus : "There is no menagerie in the world so variously stocked as that of my Lili ! She has in it the most wonderful animals, and how she gets them in she herself does not know ! Oh, how they leap, and scurry, and tramp, flapping away with their clift wings, the poor Princes" (transformed, of course) "all together, in a never-extinguished love-torment !

What is the name of this fairy? Lili! Don't ask about her: if you know her not, thank God for it! What a bustle, what a cackle, when she comes to the door, and holds the food-basket in her hand! What a squeaking, what a quacking! Every beast, every tree seems to be alive! Thus do whole troops rush to her feet, even the fish in the basins splash impatiently, with their heads out of the water! And then she scatters the bread about, with look to ravish the gods, much more beasts! Then begins such a picking, such a gobbling, such a pecking. They tumble over each other's necks; they shove, they squeeze, they tug at; they drive, they frighten, they bite each other! And all this for a bit of bread which, dry as it is, tastes out of her beautiful hands as if it had been steeped in ambrosia! But the look, too—the tone; when she calls ‘Pipi! Pipi!’ would draw down the eagle from Jupiter's throne, allure the doves of Venus, nay, even Juno's peacock. I swear they would all of them come if they heard that voice from ever so far. For thus” (here begins the real interest of the whole story) “she had enticed hither, out of the night of the woods, a Bear, unlicked and untutored, and brought him under her rule into the midst of the tame company, and made him as tame as the rest—to a certain point, you understand. How beautiful, and, ah, how kind she seemed to be!” (Here unwittingly the Bear reveals himself.) “I would have given my blood only to water her flowers! ‘I,’ say you; ‘How? who?’ Well, then, good sirs, to be plain with you, I am the Bear! caught in a net, bound with a silken cord at her feet. But how it all came to pass I will tell you another time, because to-day I am much too furious. For, ah, I stand thus in a corner, and hear the noise from afar, see all the fluttering and flapping, turn myself round and growl, and run backwards a bit, and look round me—and growl; and run again a bit and—at last—I return.” (The original of this passage is too good to be lost: “Kehr’ ich mich um, und brumm’. Und renne rückwärts eine Strecke, und seh’ mich um. Und brumm’. Und laufe wieder eine Strecke, und kehr’ doch endlich wieder um.”) “Then all at once rage stirs within me, a fierce spirit starts from out my nose, my inward nature storms. ‘What, thou be a fool, a coward hare, a Pipi, a little nut-cracking squirrel! I stake my shaggy neck to serve unused. Every little upstart tree mocks at me! I flee from the green sward, from the pretty smooth-shaven grass. The box-tree turns up its nose at me as I pass. I fly away to the darkest thicket—I break through the hedge—I leap over the pales! A spell lies like lead upon me, and forbids me to scramble and spring. A spell drives me back again. I wear myself out, and when quite tired I lie down by the artificial cascade, and champ, and weep, and toss myself half dead; and, ah, my anguish is heard by porcelain Oreades alone! All at once—ah, what a blissful feeling rushes through all my limbs!—tis she who sings there in her bower. I hear the dear, dear voice again. The whole air is

warm, is full of bloom. Ah, she sings then, indeed, that I may hear her! I rush forwards trample down all the bushes. The shrubs, the trees bend before me—and there at her feet lies the beast! She looks at him: ‘A monster! yet so droll. For a bear too gentle—for a poodle too wild! So shaggy, clumsy, cumbersome!’ She strokes his back with her little foot: he thinks himself in Paradise. How all his seven senses reel! And she looks down, quite carelessly. I kiss her shoe—I gnaw the sole of it as gently at ever a Bear can. Softly I raise myself and throw myself, by stealth, lightly on her knee. On a favourable day she suffers it, and scratches me under the ear, and pats me with petulant, heavy slap. I purr, new born in ecstasy.” (“Ich knur’, in Wonne neu geboren.”) “Then cries she, in sweet, triumphant mockery: ‘Allons, tout doux, et la menotte! Et faites serviteur, comme un joli seigneur!’ Thus she continues with jest and laughter, and the oft-deluded fool hopes on. But should he grow importunate, she holds him in, tight as before. She has, too, a little flask of balsam-fire, equalled by no honey on earth, with which she sometimes—softened by his love and truth—puts a little drop with the tip of her finger on the parching lips of her monster, and then runs away, and leaves me to myself. And I, then, though loosed, am spell-bound, I follow ever after her—seek her—shudder—flee again. Thus does she let the poor disturbed one go—is heedless of his pleasures or his pains. Nay, many a time she leaves the door half open, and looks sweetly askance at me, as if to ask if I will not escape. And I! Ye gods, it is in your hands to end this tantalising witchery! How should I thank you if you would give me freedom! Yet send me down no help; not quite in vain do I thus stretch my limbs. I feel it, I swear it, I have yet strength left!”

Having shown our Bear in love, we leave him in that blissful condition.

NORTHERN LIGHTS.

DECEMBER hung her glittering roof
Of frosty sunshine o'er the earth,
The streamers danced across the night
Like angels in a troop of mirth.

I stood in the deserted street,
A child that never saw a flower,
Till looking upward, God unveiled
The face of beauty in that hour.

Around, the city, dark and dumb,
Above, the gleaming mystery,
I stood like one who views afar
The flashing of an awful sea.
Like the bright fingers of a god,
That sweep creation's mystic bars,
They seemed on night's weird harp to wake
The song of all the eternal stars.

Their shaking glory filled my trance,
With eyes turned upward, wonder-wide
Till every wave of pulsing joy,
Rose towering in a swell of pride.
I blessed the night, I blessed the stars,
I blessed the chance that bound me there,
But chief, the floods of streaming light,
Like young Aurora's golden hair.

And still their shifting glow shall warm
The winters of my life again,
Their phantom banners wave sublime
Across the night's star-flowery plain.
They filled my heart with wild delight,
And back my yearning soul aspire
To Nature's altar crowned with song,
And bright with beauty's golden fire.

HARD FROSTS.

WAS there ever such a frost? people have said this winter. Probably some of us really experienced lower temperatures this last Christmas than any of our forefathers ever felt in England. The great historical frosts, the days when oxen were roasted on the Thames, were not days so remarkable for the intensity of the cold as for its long duration.

It is remarkable, also, that the memorably hard winters have followed very commonly on wet summers. It was so in the first great frost of which there is any record. That was in the days of King Stephen, in the year eleven hundred and fifty, when, after a wet summer, so great a frost ensued on the ninth of December, that horses and vehicles crossed the Thames upon the ice as safely as if water were earth. That frost held till March—almost a quarter of a year.

About three hundred years later, or in fourteen 'thirty-four, there was a great frost, which began on the twenty-fourth of November and continued till the tenth of February. This also followed on a wet summer, which had fearfully raised the price of corn. Goods and provisions had to be unshipped at the mouth of the river, and brought up by land into the City.

"In fifteen hundred and sixty-five," says Holinshed, "the one-and-twentieth day of December began a frost which continued so extremely, that, on New Year's even, people went over and amongst the Thames on the ice from London-bridge to Westminster. Some played at football so boldly as if it had been on the dry land. Divers of the coast shot daily at pricks set upon the Thames, and the people, both men and women, went on the Thames in greater numbers than in any street of the City of London. On the thirty-first day of January at night it began to thaw, and, five days after, was no ice to be seen between London-bridge and Lambeth, which sudden thaw caused great floods and high waters that bare down bridges and houses and drowned many people in England, especially in Yorkshire."

In sixteen 'eighty-three the Thames was again hard frozen, so that a great street ran from the Temple to Southwark. The street was lined with shops, and hackney-coaches plied in it. This frost began early in December and lasted till the seventh of February, and the pools were covered with ice eighteen inches thick. The frost fair on the Thames lasted a fortnight. There is an engraving of it in the King's Collection of the British Museum, showing the surface of the Thames peopled with gallants and

ladies in the picturesque costume of the day, show booths, boats upon wheels, a whirligig, football players, men walking on stilts, "the booth with the Phoenix on it, insured so long as the foundation stands," a circus in which a bull is baited, a fox that is being hunted, cocks being thrown at, palings within which an ox is being roasted whole. From Temple-stairs there is a street of booths called Temple-street crossing the river. There, say some of the doggerel lines under the print, were

Arts of all sorts, excelling Frankfort marts.
The genteel haberdasher there displayed
His curiosities for courted maid.
And who would not be proud to show her trimming,
Bought where the swans and boats erewhile were
swimming?
There, brides new married, kettles, pans, and dishes,
May buy upon the mansion of the fishes.

Another print of this fair, shows King Charles the Second and his court descending Temple-stairs to go upon the ice. These prints, compared with those of similar scenes in seventeen 'sixty-three and in eighteen 'fourteen, show (if the artist may be trusted, which is doubtful) that the surface of the ice on the river was unusually smooth. On the ninth of January, sixteen 'eighty-four, Evelyn mentions that he walked across the ice from Westminster-stairs to Lambeth Palace, and dined with the archbishop. An account of the frost and the breaking up of it, given in the Gentleman's Magazine, says of the sixth of February (Old Style, seventeenth according to our reckoning): "This day the frost broke. In the morning I saw a coach and six horses driven from Whitehall almost to the (London) Bridge; yet by three that day, next to Southwark the ice was gone so as boats did row to and fro, and the day after all the frost was gone." The ox-roasting at this fair was on Candlemas-day, and the king and queen came to eat some of the hot beef.

Of the great frost of seventeen hundred and eighty-nine, Doctor Derham gives a particular account, from which it appears that the lowest temperature was equal to a degree and a half of Fahrenheit. During this frost, although several persons crossed the Thames at some distance above the bridge, it was only at low water: for then the great flakes of ice that came down stopped one another at the bridge, and when the flood came the ice broke and was carried with the current up the river. We learn also that although this frost was in the south of England very rigorous, it was not felt in the north. "None of our rivers or lakes are frozen over," wrote the Bishop of Carlisle. From Edinburgh the intelligence was, "We have not had much frost to speak of, and it has not lasted long." But it made itself memorable on the Continent by its severity.

In January, seventeen hundred and sixteen, the Thames was frozen over for some miles, and there were booths and streets erected. The cold never seems to have been more intense than eleven degrees of Fahrenheit. Its power lay in its long continuance. In seventeen hundred

and thirty—thirty-one, the frost was excessive; and again, nine years after that, there was a long hard frost, never colder than ten degrees at the lowest, but enduring for nine weeks, so that again there were booths on the Thames. The transactions of the Royal Society also record that in the winter of seventeen 'fifty-three—four, there was a day of remarkable fluctuation. The thermometer within twenty-four hours rose forty or fifty degrees, the cold coming as it were by fits in an unusual manner. The lowest degree that winter was fifteen. In seventeen hundred and sixty-two—three, the hard frost set in on Christmas-day, and lasted till the twenty-ninth of January. The Thames at London would bear carriages. Ten and a half was the lowest degree of temperature reached that winter. In Cornwall, Wales, and Ireland, the winter was unusually mild, but it was very sharp indeed in the north-east of Europe. In January, seventeen 'sixty-seven, the thermometer at Norwich fell to seven degrees. The Rhine that year was frozen at Coblenz for nearly four weeks following the twenty-first of December. In the winter following, Professor Wilson, at Glasgow, observed the thermometer to be at two degrees below zero, and another person, on another day that year, found it to be one below zero at Derby.

The next of the famous frosty winters was that of seventeen 'eighty-eight—nine, when the lowest degree of cold was thirteen, but the frost lasted long enough to set up a fair on the Thames. Without mention of place, or of observer's name, it is said in Rees's Cyclopædia, that in January, seventeen hundred and ninety-five, the thermometer fell to six below zero, the only note of a degree of cold comparable to that felt in some parts of England on last Christmas morning. The thermometer fell to eleven degrees in December, seventeen hundred and ninety-eight, after which the great year of frost, and frost fair upon the Thames, was eighteen hundred and fourteen. Of this winter of eighteen hundred and fourteen, records abound. The Gentleman's Magazine reports that, in the west of England, snow fell on the nights of the tenth and eleventh of January to such an extent, that it lay twelve feet deep in the middle of the road a few miles out of Exeter, and was almost as deep in Wales. It was as bad under the hills in parts of Kent, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth of January; the road from the Three Squirrels, in Stockburn valley, to the top of Debbling hill, was wholly impassable, the snow being in some places sixteen feet deep. On the seventeenth, upwards of one hundred bags of letters had not arrived at the General Post-office; the roads were stopped in all directions.

There was fog, too, in those days. "On Monday, the third of January (1814)," says the Gentleman's Magazine, "the density of the atmosphere during the day, and the heavy fog at night during the whole of last week, in London and many miles round, has been remarkable." Coaches were overturned, and many other accidents happened. "There has been no instance of such a

fog as last week pervaded the metropolis, extending many miles round, since the earthquake at Lisbon, in 1755, when this country was visited by a fog which had not been equalled for a century before, lasting eight days. On Saturday afternoon, between two and four, the obscurity was greater than it had been during the daytime since the commencement. Yesterday, however, the fog disappeared in consequence of a change of wind." Just before this fog set in, cabinet business of great importance had been transacted, and the prime minister was lucky enough to find his way to the Continent. But the Prince Regent, on his way to Hatfield, on a visit to the Marquis of Salisbury, was lost for several hours. One of his outriders fell into a ditch, and notwithstanding the time spent, the progress was no further than Kentish Town, from which place the Prince, with great difficulty, was got back to Carlton House. Mr. Croker, secretary to the Admiralty, struggled to find his house in the western suburb, but was obliged to put back. During the great frost the fog seems to have been prevalent; for, on the twenty-ninth, it is stated that the Birmingham mail was seven hours in going from the Post-office to Uxbridge, a distance of about twenty miles. The short stages had two persons with links running by the horses' heads. But though the foot-passengers also carried links, the hackney-coaches got upon the pavement, and confusion was great in the streets. On the fourteenth of February there was a tempestuous storm of snow, and it is said that a great number of fish called "golden maids" were picked up at Brighton and sold at a good price. They floated to shore blind, and they were blinded, men said, by the snowstorm. On the twentieth of January, in consequence of the great accumulation of snow in London and the necessity of throwing it from roofs, the carriage-ways in the middle of the streets were scarcely passable, and the streams constantly flowing from the open plugs added to the frozen heap. In another day or two, and for some time afterwards, the ice on the Serpentine supported mountains of snow which sweepers had collected there. At this time, vast masses of floating ice were on the Thames, and these being generally heaped with snow, formed sometimes great bergs, cracking and grinding against each other with a loud noise. Sometimes those icebergs rose one over another covered with foam, and were violently impelled by the wind and water, with wild crashing, through the arches of the bridge. The chief rivers of England were frozen over, and, on the fourteenth January, the snow in Dublin lay to a greater depth than had been known for half a century. In the narrow streets, after the pathways had been in some measure cleared, the snow was more than six feet in depth. In various parts of Ireland vast numbers of persons died of cold and hunger. The coldest days were the ninth, thirteenth, and fifteenth of January; on the ninth, the thermometer fell to its lowest point, of three degrees. There were five days in that January

upon which the thermometer was at some point between three and ten. On Sunday, the thirtieth of January, the immense masses of ice that floated from the upper parts of the river, in consequence of the thaw of the two preceding days, blocked up the Thames between Blackfriars and London bridges, and offered every probability of its being frozen over in a day or two. On Monday, the thirty-first, the expectation was realised, and during the whole of the afternoon the bridges were thronged with people watching adventurous passengers crossing the Thames on the ice. The frost of Sunday night so united the vast masses as to render them immovable by the tide. On Tuesday, the first of February, the river had a solid surface from Blackfriars-bridge to some distance below Three Cranes Stairs, at the bottom of Queen-street, Cheapside. The watermen thrown out of work drove a new trade, for they placed notices at the end of all the streets leading to the city side of the river, announcing, "A Safe Footway Over." This attracted immense crowds, but none went down or came up without paying threepence or sixpence to the watermen, who held all the approaches. On the rugged plain, amusements were provided. Small sheep were roasted on the ice. For a sight of the cookery, sixpence was asked, and for a slice of the meat when done—it was called Lapland mutton—the charge was again sixpence. There were booths ornamented with flags and signs, and within them, gin, beer, gingerbread, and so forth. The thoroughfare opposite Three Cranes Stairs was complete and well frequented. Strewn with ashes, it was a safe though rugged roadway.

In other places several accidents occurred. A plumber, venturing to cross with some lead in his hands, sank between two masses of ice and was drowned.

On Wednesday, February the second, the sports were continued; the Grand Mall, or walk, now extended from Blackfriars-bridge to London-bridge. This was called, also, the City-road, and was thronged with people. Eight or ten printing-presses were at work, striking off commemorative effusions for the lovers of this sort of verse :

Behold the mighty Thames is frozen o'er,
Which lately ships of mighty burden bore;
How different arts and pastimes here you see,
But printing claims the superiority.

Lines like these were sold as fast as they were printed, because they were printed on the Thames.

On Thursday, the number of visitors to the fair increased. There were swings, booths, bookstalls, dancing in a barge, playing at skittles. The ice seemed to be a solid rock. The appearance of London-bridge and parts of the shore was most picturesque. In many places mountains of ice upheaved had the aspect of a stone quarry. On Friday the crowd still increased. Some of the watermen who kept the approaches made six pounds that day, and many

persons remained on the ice to see the fair by moonlight. On Saturday, there was a slight fall of snow, and the wind veered to the south. This did not diminish the number of the visitors. On Sunday, at two o'clock in the morning, a thaw had set in, and the tide began to flow with great rapidity at London-bridge. At this time a curious accident occurred. A publican, who had a booth on the Thames opposite Brook's Wharf, went home at nine at night, the booth being left in charge of two men. Suddenly it was violently hurried towards Blackfriars-bridge. There were then nine men in it, but in their alarm they let the candles set fire to the covering, and were between fire and water till they got into a lighter which had broken from its moorings. In this they were wrecked, for it was dashed to pieces on one of the piers of the bridge. Seven of the men then got on to the pier and were rescued; the other two escaped to a barge which runs off Puddle Dock.

On Monday, the seventh of February, the ice between Blackfriars-bridge and London-bridge having partly given way the day before, the whole mass gave way, and swept with a tremendous violence through the arches of Blackfriars-bridge, wrecking about forty barges. The whole river was cleared in a very short time, and from that time to this, the Thames has borne no more frost fairs.

The sharpest winter, until now, that we have had since eighteen fourteen was that of eighteen 'thirty-seven—eight, in which Murphy, an almanack-maker, became famous by his lucky guess at a cold January day. In that year there was a long continued frost, and a sheep roasted on the Thames at Hammersmith. But "Murphy's coldest day," the coldest of 'thirty-eight, was sixteen degrees warmer than the Christmas-eve and Christmas-day last past, when faultless mercurial thermometers, in the hands of an astro-nomer, registered at one time thirteen degrees below zero, or forty-seven below freezing! Four degrees (or eight-and-twenty below freezing point) was then in many parts of England the average temperature for the whole four-and-twenty Christmas hours.

A SCENE IN THE COTTON COUNTRY.

I AM starting from Memphis, and going for four or five days down that mighty flood the Mississippi, first to Bâton Rouge, and then on to New Orleans.

I have just come on board the *Peytoona*, a first-class racing steamer, and having dismissed the black man who brought down my black portmanteau with the red diamonds, am now "a free nigger" myself, ready for anything, from an explosion downwards. The *Peytoona* derives its harmoniously liquid name from a celebrated racehorse, on which many a cotton plantation has been staked, and in whose honour many a revolver has been revolved, to the increase of lawyers' fees and the lessening of what political economists call "available population." The bronze effigies

of the nimble-footed Peytoona, "full fetisly wrought," as Chaucer obscurely remarks in his admirable poem entitled *Passim*, stands on a high bracket, above the many-coloured bottles in the steam-boat bar-room, first door on the right as you enter the great saloon. I am, to tell the whole truth, rather glad to get away from Memphis; which is a dirty dangerous unfinished sort of place, swarming with rats and rowdies, not to mention the vulgar "drummers," as the touting bagsmen of the northern houses of commerce are generally called in America. The hotel is large and scrambling, and the dinners are confused by jostling crowds of lazy slovenly slave waiters, who run about and butt each other, and knock down piles of plates and pyramids of glasses *en feux de joie* and periodical grand crashes.

Now, as I look back at the town from the steam-boat deck, the steep earth cliffs are lurid with bonfires, for there is an election meeting to-night, and they are burning tar-barrels on the Mississippi shore, in honour of Douglas "the little Giant." Through smoky red sheets of flame I see some little dark figures; they are the Douglas adherents tending the beacons that fire the dim twilight and scare the coveys of stars. Lower down there are blacks—for night turns us all to negroes—running about with long poles; at the end of which are real mediæval cressets—iron baskets full of blazing pine-knots. There are men, too, dragging down cotton bales, part of the Peytoona's lading; and every now and then they seem to blow my head off with splitting salutes, for, at election meetings all through America they use cannon.

Boom-bang—bang-boom! they go, as if a giant were knocking in a nail in some room of his sky parlour that was out of repair, or as if, after clamping it on the other side, he had slammed his outer door and shut himself in for the night. America, however, is not the only country where, in politics particularly, noise is supposed to be a proof of earnestness, talent, and patriotism; so I let the guns go on, and bless them, though they give me a headache.

I have come down from the town, because there is a dreadful procession there of men ringing cow-bells and shouting for "Bell and Everett!" And now this horrible cannonading! But never mind; the Americans are an excitable people, especially the Southerners, and, after all, the world was not made for my special person's use.

The remarkable feature of a steam-boat about to start, whether on river or sea, is, that it is impossible to get anywhere where one is not in the way. I believe positively, that if I were to go now and stand on my head on the main truck, in five minutes some Cæsar or Pompey would ask me to move and let him put down the "generalman's box." Wheeled trucks full of brown horse-hide chests banded with black, such as Americans affect, pour in, and block up every passage in the boat, down from the burning fiery furnace up to the place where the cotton bales wall us in.

As I am going to spend a considerable seg-

ment of my life on board this boat, the Peytoona, I proceed to overhaul it and examine its points of danger and safety; for, although my business in this chapter is more especially "the Cotton Country," I must briefly describe my floating castle, which is no more like an English steam-boat than a London penny steamer is like Noah's ark, the *Warrior*, or the Great Easter.

Our racing boat is a huge floating three-tier card-house; or rather, one of those little pagodas of diaphanous barley-sugar that crown the centre table at a public dinner. The top story, the pinnacle of this Tower of Babel, is the little square glass-house in which our pilot struggles with the wheel. In anxious moments, when the good boat is entangled in a net of sand-bars, he looks to my mind like a madman struggling with a wheel of Fortune.

Below him, on the second floor, is a sort of flat roofed crystal palace, where the captain and all the officers have their berths, and where, when off watch, they read dime novels, smoke, and do et cetera. On this level—which is sheeted with thin lead, for fear of sparks—are rows of arm-chairs, where one can sit and shoot pelicans and alligators, muse, read, or sleep. The deck here is made very thin for lightness, and it vibrates as you walk round the two tall funnels that rise through it. Below this springy and alarming deck comes the floor on which the glass doors of the grand saloon open. Here, under a pent-house formed by the upper deck, are also chairs, intermingled with luggage, where men also smoke, et cetera, read, and sleep; looking out upon the mighty and monotonous river.

Below this stage is the ground floor, where the negro sailors and steerage passengers are, and where the furnaces blaze and glow. All over this deck, unprotected by any tarpaulin from the furnaces or fire-sprinkling pine-knots, are huge piles of square fluffy cotton bales, bound round with iron bands. Below this barathrum, I suppose, is more stowage room; but lower I did not, in this vessel, venture.

As for the saloon—to return to that focus of the vessel—it is a splendid affair, with a drawing-room at one end for the ladies, innumerable chandeliers multiplying themselves in mirrors, and resplendent paneling, white and gold. There are sofas and ottomans and a piano, with room for cards, conversation, business, flirting, and dancing. On either side of this long hall open the doors of our neat and spacious berths. By the entrance of the saloon, on either side, are the bar-room and purser's office; outside, is the barber's, where the negroes congregate to practise the banjo—for we have nightly very creditable concerts on board, and nearly all negroes are musical. Here sometimes, when I stroll in, I find the grey-bearded negro barber asleep in his chair, with his professional comb stuck in his own crisp locks. Somewhere here, too, is kept, I believe, the sacred gong which announces our frequent and luxurious meals.

I am singularly comfortable, for my cabin is airy, and has windows opening on the outer

balcony, not far from where the black waiters laugh, joke, and clean the dishes; and I have an agreeable berth companion, Mr. Elias Madison, a slim young schoolmaster, who has left Buffalo, and is going to try his fortune at Bâton Rouge, where Zachary Taylor, the old general, used to live.

Elias is a pleasant-looking fellow, but a little of the pedant. He is very emaciated just now with a recent attack of the "bone fever," that has been scouring the South. He takes white powders—I believe quinine—as antidotes against more of it, every morning when he has reason to fear a return of either "his hot" or "his cold" attack. He is profoundly ignorant of English manners, and at the same time profoundly curious; he asks all sorts of strange questions as to whether the Queen can sentence ministers to death (the story of Essex and Elizabeth is evidently his precedent), and whether people who forge on the Bank of England are always sent to the Tower. His only travelling book is a Shakespeare, two feet long by five inches thick, that he lumbers about the deck, while he scans Titus Andronicus and all the spurious plays. Still he is an intelligent, kind, harmless fellow, and is never tired of explaining the rarer American dishes to me at dinner. He points me out, too, the card-sharpers, and teaches me how to distinguish the people of the different states—the wild Arkansas man from the polished Virginian; the hot-brained Carolina man from the calculating notion-monger of Connecticut; the sallow half-French native of Louisiana from the tall bony Kentuckian.

But to the Cotton Country. I am going down that river, so awfully grand from its very dulness and monotony, which rises three thousand miles from the spot where it empties itself into the Gulf of Mexico—that river which, before it reaches the arms of its long-expectant lover, the sea, has had given it by nature for its dowry the four great streams, the Ohio, the Arkansas, the Red River, and the Missouri—a mighty stream it is, that carries blessings to half a continent—a stream that has as great a destiny before it, as the vast new country it irrigates. * * *

It is only twenty-four hours since I came on board, and already I see, by my map, that we have passed many towns, villages, and cotton landings. Norfolk is behind us, Commerce is out of sight, the Horse-Shoe Bend is at our rear, Yazoo is miles below the horizon. We have been taking in cotton all night; I know it, for I occasionally awoke and heard the bales lumber and jolt down the double planks, all the time I heard the blacks sing "Bob Ridley," and the sharp yelping voice of the first mate hurrying on any passengers who wanted to land; for, as he justly said, the boat could not stop half the night if all Congress wanted to go on shore.

Last night we were in Mississippi, now we are near Montgomery's Point in Arkansas (Arkensaw, pronounce it). It is a lovely autumn morning, the balm and incense of nature's early sacrifice to the deity is in the air, slightly fla-

voured, but not unpleasantly, with the smoke of about three dozen cigars.

Our group is of about that number: one rowdy smokes two cheroots at once, in bravado. We are up warming ourselves on the second floor over the saloon, and we form a circle round the fiery funnel; for the air is cool, and we are all afraid of the "bone fever." Every man but myself and a man with an iron stirrup, has his legs raised higher than his head, resting on the top rail of a vacant chair. I have tried this, but I can't do it, and, not being able to do it, I deny the pleasure, as well as the convenience of it.

Several are cutting plugs, and my friend Colonel Isaiah Butts is telling a quaint story of the roughness of Arkansas life a few years ago. As it bears upon the question of the civilisation of the Cotton Country, I will tell it as it was told to me.

"A dangerous cutting scrape," Colonel Isaiah Butts called it, as he shifted his plug, and, rocking himself on his chair, thus to us poured forth his winged words.

"It was at Napoleon, the point where the Arkansas empties itself into the Mississippi; he had gone there about some cotton, and finding the overseer had gone up the river looking after a 'painter' (what a curious place for an artist, I thought), I had to wait about in Napoleon, which even now isn't much, and then, was indeed a rowdy place. Yes, sir, it *was* that. I turned down three streets," went on the colonel, "and as there was a gouging match going on in every street, I thought it wise to make tracks for the hotel. Wall, I hadn't sat there ten minutes sucking at a brandy-cobbler, when who should come in but Horatio Scrooggs and John Pike, two of the most tarnation ruffians in that whole state.

"Scrooggs he begins telling a lie (seeing me a stranger) about a brother of his on the river who was so addicted to gouging, that he used to dry all the eyes he could get and keep them for show in his waistcoat-pocket. Then, up comes Pike, and winking at Scrooggs, tells a bigger lie still, about a neighbour's son of his rising twelve, who had just gouged a big lad of sixteen who had shot at him about a quarrel at ten-pins.

"Suddenly the liquor seemed to heat Scrooggs, for he said to Pike, 'Do you still carry that foot-long toothpick of yours that you murdered the German with, at the Caucus meeting at Vicksburg?'

"'Yes,' says Scrooggs, fierce as a gamecock; 'yes, and a tall five-shooter, too, for all infernal nigger worshippers.'

"'How's your stomach for fightin' now, then,' says Pike.

"'Peart,' says Scrooggs.

"'Heard you say you'd bleed me next time we met,' says Pike.

"'That's me,' says Scrooggs.

"The two Bowie knives, broad and bright, flashed forth at the same moment.

"Wall, I tell you, gentlemen, the fellows had carved each other briskly for ten or twelve

minutes, when one of Scroggs's eyes, getting a little loose in the socket, and one of his ears being shaved off, and Pike's abdomen being several times punctured, it suddenly occurred to the too amiable Arkansas gentlemen that they had both had enough of it.

"Why, what's all this, mister?" says I, to the landlord.

"Oh! it's of no account, stranger," says the landlord to me—a fellow he was, weighing about two hundred and fifty pounds, and with a face like an Illinois barn-door—"tain't nothin'—let the boys enjoy 'emselves. Hist in a little pizen, stranger!"—and he set a black bottle and a yellow bowl of black sugar before me. I needn't say that I did not wait for the overseer, but left by the first boat that landed at Napoleon. I had had enough of roughing it in Arkansas."

Just as the laughter following the colonel's story was dying out in distant cackles—for all the negro waiters were laughing, and so were two newly-purchased slaves, going home to their new plantation, and who used to sit all day, like fowls with the pip, on two adjoining cotton bales—we sighted Bolivar landing.

Now, as this landing will stand for Bayou la Fourche, or any other landing above or below it, I will describe it at full length. Innumerable bends and "cuts off" we have passed this morning already, and we are now going to stop for half an hour at Bolivar landing, and take in Mr. Chicard's cotton bales and some hundred truckfuls of resinous pine-knots for our furnace fires. Patience I must have, tiresome as the delay is, for the boat will stop at four or five other landings to-day, and so it will to-morrow, and indeed every day, till we reach the great emporium of cotton—New Orleans.

Our two tremendously tall black funnels, that at night are sometimes half red-hot, grow very excited at the thought of stopping. The safety signal shrieks in its agony as if our furnaces were fed with live slave babies. There is, too, a curious unearthly sinking and rushing sound in the funnels, that seems to me to be the fit precursor of an explosion. The long-drawn shriek echoes down the river, and frightens three turkey buzzards that are perching on the rusty wreck of a steamer's boiler.

N.B.—A friend, to encourage me, shows me a cotton-tree, thirty feet high, in which the body of the captain of the said steamer was found to have been blown.

We slacken, we stop. I can see the square cotton bales, bound up in sacking and banded with iron, waiting on the high earth-banks ready for us. Yonder, those almshouse-looking row of white cottages—white roof and wall—are the negroes' quarters; this is Mr. Chicard's plantation. If you want to know how many slaves he keeps, count the cabins that run a little way in from the bank, reckon five negroes, as an average, to each cabin, and you have the total at once.

That larger cottage to the left, among the locust-trees, is the overseer's; and that further

one, larger still, is Mr. Chicard's; but he is a non-resident, and the overseer reigns here supreme. That large bushy tree with small leaves, something like the acacia's, is the locust-tree—the carob-tree—the tree on whose fruit John the Baptist fed in the wilderness of Judea. There are many sorts of locust. This is the black locust; mark the fruit hanging down in great black pods, like enormous scarlet-runners gone to seed. They are good to eat, sweet, and nutritious, and are imported into England largely for cattle.

"Yahoop—ugh—horoo—yahoop!" Here is a negro ear-driver. He is driving two mules in a tumbling waggon, and stands straddling on the mere flat board that forms the vehicle. He has come for Massa George Amos Chicard, his master's son, and Massa George Amos's luggage.

"Yahoop, Peacock — yahoop, Sunflower! Here, get along wid dat cotton. O! yahoop, Massa George, here's old Titus! How do, Massa George? Yah! yah! yah!"

I think every one on board the Peytoona smiles at Titus's gambols; and one planter, knowing I was an Englishman (and of course an Abolitionist), comes up to me and says triumphantly, "The most light-hearted race in the whole habitable world—no whipping here!"

Now a crowd of anxious men, with pale brown horse-hide trunks and saddle-bags, crowd to the gangway, or take final juleps and slings at the bar of the Peytoona; while a gang of our rough deck hands storm up the bank, urged by our bull-dog mate as whipper-in, to drag in our instalment of cotton bales—some hundred and twenty—the blacks run to the wood-stack and load themselves with pine-knots.

Now I, too, decent from the vessel, leaping down on the landing planks from high spongy bulwarks of cotton bales, and tumbling up the crumbly earth-banks, through scraped cuttings worn away by the sliding of twenty years' cotton bales.

By this time some dozen men, in all varieties of flannel shirts, no shirts, wide-awakes, and general bandit-looking felt head-gear, are by twos and twos lugging and dragging the cotton bales down towards our ship. Every one of them (a large percentage of them are Paddys and Murphys—a few mulattoes) carries a strong double-pronged steel hook, something like the hook hop-dealers use, or the movable hooks for hanging meat employed in our butchers' shops. With these calthrop implements they dig into the sacking of the cotton bale and drag it downward, or delay its progress, as the cotton loader who uses it may think best.

The gang works moodily enough, save when, now and then, the sacking breaks from a novice's hook, and a runaway bale, floundering through the ranks of the deck hands, blunders with tremendous speed down the forty feet of steep dusty earth-bank, and alights with a crash—after felling several people with its very wind—almost at the water's edge. I observe that the old hands are rather afraid of these stray bales,

and give them, as sailors say, "a wide offing." There are floating legends among them, reckless as they are, of broken limbs and loss of life from such accidents, and they avoid them habitually as veteran soldiers dodge spent balls. The hooks tearing at the sacking make a peculiar ripping noise, which one soon learns to associate with a Mississippi cotton landing.

Sometimes the men, when the landing is precipitous, drag the bales to a low part of the cliff, and then tumble them over with a crash and a smoky cloud of frightened dust. In other cases, when the banks slope more gradually up from the river towards the cotton plantations, they stick in their hooks, and jolt them over and over down to the landing-planks, where the mate and others of the crew wait to receive them.

It is wonderful to see the agility and dexterity with which the older hands steer the cotton bales with their hooks, even when leaping and trotting at their highest speed. They hold on, running, twitching them alternately right and left, taking advantage of every inch of advantageous ground. Sometimes they get a fall, but generally hold on and drive the bale straight to its destination with half the trouble that the other men exert.

The greener hands take quite twice as much out of themselves, to use the trainer's language, and with only half the result. The bales won't lift with them, and, when they do lift, exert a ponderous conservative vis inertiae, or go tearing away into some mud-pool quite in the wrong direction, or vexatiously, as out of sheer spite, precipitate themselves headlong into the water, amid the laughter of the older hands, and the vociferous curses of the superintending mate.

Now, having watched the cascade of jostling bales leap and fly down the banks long enough, I go up higher, with my kind friend, Dr. Bonus of Ticonderoga, who is anxious to show me a cotton plantation in full bloom. I had already seen cotton in Greece—the great plains of Boeotia, when I rode through them, were snowy white with cotton—so I had in Asia Minor; so I had already in America, in Kentucky and Tennessee; but that was far north for cotton, and the plants grew there pinched and stunted, and were dwindled to mere currant-bushes.

But here I am, almost in Louisiana, and the sun burns over our heads with African violence; so that the very blue of the sky has a fiery blankness about it, and seems to the dazzled eye almost of a neutral colour. The cotton plants are here some six or seven feet high, richly luxurious, the leaves are of a lavish size, and as large almost as those of a fig-tree, but of a finer and fraileer texture. I feel like the spy at Eschol as I pick a great stem on which flower, seed, bud, and cotton are all living together in perfect harmony. The flower is large and bell-like, of a delicate pale yellow, paler than our evening primrose, and with a fine tropical dark eye. Its smell is evanescent, yet not without a suspicion of fragrance. The buds are hard, green, and of a serrated oval form, larger in

circumference than thrushes' eggs. The cotton hangs on the cruciform dry sections of the seed-pods in white fluffy bunches, as much as a man's fingers can pinch at one time. Beautifully white and pure and useful this wonderful fibre looks, as it hangs in snow-flakes from the dry crackling cones.

And, as I pick and admire the tall cotton-trees from which great ropes of wild grape-vines hang like rigging, I hear a cry, and, looking round, see a negro boy, with bare black legs, mounted on a huge chesnut stallion, crying out, that "if massa doesn't make tracks he'll be too late for de stim-boat."

The steam-boat shrieked for me at that moment as if I were her lost child; and I was with her in two minutes.

VOLUNTEERS AT HYTHE.

WITH an order from the War-office to attend the course of musketry instruction there, I went to Hythe. I arrived on a day of this last cold bone-chilling month of December. I enjoyed my drill during the fortnight before Christmas, coming back home to the domestic roast beef and plum-pudding.

I believe that no artist was ever mad enough to paint a picture of Hythe. There is a ruined castle in a wood somewhere near, which I dare say somebody has painted. Sandgate and Folkestone and the hills, when one is on the top of them, are undeniable, but of Hythe there is nothing to be said but that it is Hythe, a place as dull as my account of what I did there may turn out to be. For, if there were anything to paint whether in oils or ink, I couldn't be its painter. I am a volunteer who cares only to seize facts, and has a fancy for exhibiting their skeletons. Would anybody like to see the Skeleton of a Fortnight—the skeleton of the fortnight that I spent in attendance on the course of musketry drill at Hythe?

Many volunteers went down together. One of us had on his right arm the badge of a first-class marksman, a silver rifle with three stars. There were not carriages enough at Westerhanger to convey us: some of us were carted in, therefore, by a waggoner whom we impressed into our service, among his corn sacks. We stopped the waggon at the barracks to report ourselves, and then entered the little town in state to spend a pleasant evening together at the Swan Hotel.

Next day was Wednesday; and, at half-past nine we went off to parade, where ninety-seven were in the muster of our volunteers. So many never were at Hythe before. We were parted into a right wing and a left wing. The right wing was commanded by Captain Coles and Lieutenant Walker. Captain Bostock headed the left wing. We were all subdivided into five sections, the number in each section being nine or ten, and every section under a staff-sergeant.

What did my section learn? Rifle and lock; afterwards being catechised thereon. Then we

went to the Shingles, to learn aiming drill, and judging distance drill up to three hundred yards, and then we marched back to the barracks. What to do there? We were to have position drill, as a rear rank standing. We hurried back to the hotel at one P.M., and enjoyed lunch immensely after our long march through mud and over shingle. At two P.M. came platoon exercise by motions standing. In a lecture, then the Hythe way of instruction, was explained by Colonel Wilford a vast number of things we are all the wiser for. I think he said crack sportsmen seldom make good rifle shots, because they want a running or a flying target. He also said Britannia was a female sitting upon a Lion, and he hoped the Lion would be always found to be stuffed with ball cartridge. But I wish his leonine majesty beef, and plenty of it all his days to come. He's not an ostrich. Well, at six P.M. we went to dinner—sixty-three of us in the large room that was by yards too small—and fourteen in a little room down stairs. The dinners of Hythe were not bad, nor dear. Soup and fish on alternate days, entrées, joints, then sweets, then cheese. Concerning wine, the caterer of Hythe put up, or somebody on his part, this placard, explaining (to all those who understood) the rule about the payment for our wine. Verbatim, thus :

" Wine consumers at and after dinner will be divided among those that drinks it and those gentlemen who does not mark no wine on the dinner papers will be charged also."

There is no spelling or grammar drill at Hythe.

The tale of Thursday differs somewhat from the tale of Wednesday. It rained on Thursday. Colonel Wilford lectured us at half-past nine upon the theoretical principles of shooting. Then our sergeant taught cleaning of rifles, dismounting of the lock, &c. Then we went to inspect all sorts of weapons, models and diagrams kept in the armoury, and subscribed half a guinea apiece towards prizes for best shots. At one P.M., lunch, and still rain. Then came position drill, aiming drill, judging distance drill. The section that can make the greatest number of points in judging distance, marches back to the barracks at the head of all the rest, who follow in the order of success. The last must not mind being made targets for certain oft-repeated jokes.

Next day, rather fine; out again at half-past nine. A lecture on the trajectory, from Colonel Wilford; then position drill, standing and kneeling. Then an awfully rough march over the Shingles—ah, how I wished they would flag over the Shingles!—where there was aiming drill and judging distance drill. Went back to the barracks, and subscribed half-crowns to the Library Fund. The usual lunch-time was followed by platoon exercise; then came a short lecture on theoretical principles from Captain Coles, after which some of us peaceful Londoners persuaded the sergeant to give us a lesson in the bayonet exercise. A splendid exercise, producing splendid arms and legs!

Then came a rainy Saturday; but we were in school as usual at half-past nine cleaning arms, remounting locks, passing on to the recreations of position drill standing and kneeling, and the turn-out on the Shingles (oh, the Shingles!), aiming at four hundred yards and judging distance at six hundred. After lunch, the rain made itself master of the situation, so we got a half-holiday.

Next day, Sunday, there being no skin on my instep, for the clumsy shingle boots had rubbed it off, I stayed at home to let my skin grow.

But there was a fine Monday, and at half-past nine there was Captain Coles again lecturing about the culminating point of the trajectory, the first graze of the bullet, the margin for cavalry and infantry, the ricochet. General Hay read part of a letter from Scotland written by somebody who had attended a shooting-match at the risk of his life, and telling of an elderly member of the corps who, being ordered to "half-cock," politely offered his rifle to the captain, begging him to do it for him, for he said, "I dinna ken hoo to ha' cook!" Aiming drill on the Shingles at five hundred yards. Afterwards, judging distance drill and snapping caps. After lunch our section was photographed. The platoon exercise as a front rank kneeling, then bayonet exercise; and then I bought a New Zealand rifle of the armorer. Next day we had position drill third practice, standing and kneeling, followed by aiming drill up to six hundred yards on the relentless Shingle, of which every stone treated me as its particular enemy. We had also to fire ten rounds of blank cartridges. At two P.M., Colonel Wilford lectured us on the trajectory, windage, sighting, rifling of barrels, and keeping of arms and ammunition in good order. The colonel advocates kneeling to shoot, which certainly would not be a good habit for the sportsman after pheasants. He said, "If I were told to fire at a man fifteen yards distant from me, I would fire from the knee. Why? Because I could make sure of killing him." Made a memorandum in my note-book, that whenever I make a deadly enemy, I'll tell the colonel to fire at him.

Next day, some of us were nervous. It was to be our first day of real shooting. We fired five shots at a hundred and fifty, and five at two hundred yards, before lunch. After lunch, had our platoon exercises, and position drill.

Next morning promised to be fine, and we marched to the Shingles. As soon as we got there the morning broke its promise. Down came the rain, and we marched back again. Nothing could be done when the rain washed the size off the targets till the markers couldn't see the hits. But, at two P.M., Colonel Wilford lectured us upon the principles on which back sight is adjusted, and on more such matters. Then we were ordered to the Shingles, and fired five shots in the dark. I believe I fired into my enemies, the stones, and served them right. The day after that was fine and favourable.

Know, England, that I shot well, and received the warm congratulations of my friends! After lunch, the lecture was on the recoil of the rifle, and so forth. Towards dusk I refreshed myself by going to look at the skulls in the crypt of the church. They are (of course they are) the skulls of an army of Danes, who landed on this coast one thousand and seventeen years ago. The Britons defeated them, and slew thirty thousand of them, but were so tired when they had done it that they left the dead enemies unburied. Charitable people afterwards gathered their scattered bones within the sanctuary.

The next morning was fine; but the glare of the sun, and a peculiar state of the atmosphere, were bad for the shooting. We had a half holiday, which I spent on a walk to Sandgate. The next day being Sunday, many of us went to Folkestone, and on, over the hill tops by the sea, to Dover. There we rambled about the Castle, and dined at the Lord Warden, where there was no threat that wine consumers should be cut up after dinner and distributed among "those that drinks it," whoever Those may be, and whatever It may be. Blood, I suppose.

Cold rain became snow on Monday. We fired five shots at four hundred yards; the other five at five hundred, weather did not permit. General Hay talked to us, after lunch, in the lecture-room, depreciating the mere eagerness of men to be crack shots, when the man who remained in the second class might make the best musketry instructor. Colonel Wilford hereupon said, in corroboration, that the best musketry instructor under him was a man that had lost one of his arms.

On Tuesday morning, after hard frost, we went at half-past nine to the Shingles, and fired five shots, at five hundred yards. At two P.M. we returned to the Shingles, none the less loose and lumpy for the frost, and fired ten rounds;—namely, five at five hundred and fifty, and five at six hundred yards. That evening, all of us in our full dress, chiefly grey and green, we entertained at dinner the officers of the staff. The next day was the nineteenth of December—very cold. File and volley drill in the morning, after lunch, ten rounds of file firing at three hundred, and ten rounds of volley firing at four hundred yards. Felt a gentleman behind me pressing the muzzle of his loaded rifle on my back, while he put on the cap; and felt quite grateful when the performance was concluded, and no bullet had passed through me. The next day was the twentieth of December. There was skirmishing drill for us at half-past nine, and at eleven o'clock I went, for the last time, to trample on my foes, the Shingles. Fired ten rounds, skirmishing, at distances varying from four hundred to two hundred yards. After lunch, I came back to London, after a happy fortnight among teachers of all grades, courteous, attentive, even, I may say, anxious to inform. For me, there were to be, that year, no more mornings of drill, but there were to be, I hoped, more evenings of jollity.

It is evidence of the good teaching we had,

that not one of our batch of ninety-seven was left in the third or lowest class. The figure of merit to which all attained being slightly above the average for the same number of courses among officers of the army.

A DAY'S RIDE: A LIFE'S ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

I AM obliged to acknowledge that I was vain-glorious enough to accept a seat in the Crofton carriage on the morning of their departure, and accompany them for a mile or so of the way—even at the price of returning on foot—just that I might show myself to the landlady and that odious old waiter in a position of eminence, and make them do a bitter penance for the insults they had heaped on an illustrious stranger. It was a poor and a paltry triumph, and over very contemptible adversaries, but I could not refuse it to myself. Crofton, too, contributed largely to the success of my little scheme, by insisting that I should take the place beside his sister, while he sat with his back to the horses; and though I refused at first, I acceded at last, with the bland compliance of a man who feels himself once more in his accustomed station.

As throughout this true history I have candidly revealed the inmost traits of my nature—well knowing the while how deteriorating such innate analogy must prove—I have ever felt that he who has small claims to interest by the events of his life, can make some compensation to the world by an honest exposure of his motives, his weaknesses, and his struggles. Now, my present confession is made in this spirit, and is not absolutely without its moral, for, as the adage tells us, "Look after the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves;" so would I say, Guard yourself carefully against petty vices. You and I, most esteemed reader, are—I trust fervently—little likely to be arraigned on a capital charge. I hope sincerely that transportable felonies, and even misdemeanours, may not picture among the accidents of our life; such-like are the pounds that take care of themselves, but the "small pence," which require looking after, are little envies, and jealousies, and rancours, petty snobberies of display, small exhibitions of our being better than this man or greater than that; these, I repeat to you, accumulate on a man's nature just the way barnacles fasten on a ship's bottom—from mere time, and it is wonderful what damage can come of such paltry obstacles.

I very much doubt if a Roman conqueror regarded the chained captive who followed his chariot with a more supreme pride than I bestowed upon that miserable old waiter who now bowed himself to the ground before me, and when I ordered my dinner for four o'clock, and said that probably I might have a friend to dine with me, his humiliation was complete.

"I wish I knew the secret of your staying here," said Mary Crofton, as we drove along; "why will you not tell it?"

"Perhaps it might prove indiscreet, Mary; our friend Potts may have become a 'mauvais sujet' since we have seen him last?"

I wrapped myself in a mysterious silence, and only smiled.

"Lindau, of all places to stop at!" resumed she, pettishly. "There is nothing remarkable in the scenery, no art treasures, nothing socially agreeable; what can it possibly be that detains you in such a place?"

"My dear Mary," said Crofton, "you are, without knowing it, violating a hallowed principle; you are no less than leading into temptation. Look at poor Potts there, and you will see that while he knows in his inmost heart the secret which detains him here is some passing and insignificant circumstance unworthy of mention, you have, by imparting to it a certain importance, suggested to his mind the necessity of a story; give him now but five minutes to collect himself, and I'll engage that he will 'come out' with a romantic incident that would never have seen the light but for a woman's curiosity."

"Good Heavens!" thought I, "can this be a true interpretation of my character? Am I the weak and impressionable creature this would bespeak me?" I must have blushed deeply at my own reflection, for Crofton quickly added,

"Don't get angry with me, Potts, any more than you would with a friend who'd say, 'Take care how you pass over that bridge, I know it is rotten and must give way.'"

"Let me answer you," said I, courageously, for I was acutely hurt to be thus arraigned before another. "It is more than likely that you, with your active habits and stirring notions of life, would lean very heavily on him who, neither wanting riches nor honours, would adopt some simple sort of dreamy existence, and think that the green alleys of the beech wood, or the little paths beside the river, pleasanter sauntering than the gilded ante-chamber of a palace; and just as likely is it that you would take him roundly to task about wasted opportunities, and misapplied talents, and stigmatise an inglorious indolence what might as possibly be called a contented humility. Now, I would ask you, why should one man be the measure of another? The load you could carry with ease might serve to crush me, and yet there may be some light burdens that would suit my strength, and in bearing which I might taste a sense of duty grateful as your own."

"I have no patience with you," began Crofton, warmly; but his sister stopped him with an imploring look, and then, turning to me, said:

"Edward fancies that every one can be as energetic and active as himself, and occasionally forgets what you have just so well remarked as to the relative capacities of different people."

"I want him to do something, to be something besides a dreamer!" burst he in, almost angrily.

"Well, then," said I, "you shall see me begin at this moment, for I will get down here and walk briskly back to the town." I called to the

postillions to pull up at the same time, and in spite of remonstrances, entreaties—almost beseechings from Mary Crofton—I persisted in my resolve, and bade them farewell.

Crofton was so much hurt that he could scarcely speak, and when he gave me his hand, it was in the coldest of manners.

"But you'll keep our rendezvous, won't you?" said Mary; "we shall meet at Rome?"

"I really wonder, Mary, how you can force our acquaintanceship where it is so palpably declined. Good-by—farewell," said he to me.

"Good-by," said I, with a gulp that almost choked me; and away drove the carriage, leaving me standing in the train of dust it had raised. Every crack of the postboys' whips gave me a shock as though I had felt the thong on my own shoulders; and, at last, as sweeping round a turn of the road the carriage disappeared from view, such was the sense of utter desolation that came over me, that I sat down on a stone by the wayside, overwhelmed. I do not know if I ever felt such an utter sense of destitution as at that moment. "What wealth of friends must a man possess," thought I, "who can afford to squander them in this fashion! How could I have repelled the counsels that kindness alone could have prompted? Surely Crofton must know far more of life than I did?" From this, I went on to inquire why it was that the world showed itself so unforgiving to idleness in men of small fortune, since, if no burden to the community, they ought to be as free as their richer brethren. It was a puzzling theme, and though I revolved it long, I made but little of it, the only solution that occurred to me was, that the idleness of the humble man is not relieved by the splendours and luxuries which surround a rich man's leisure, and that the world resents the pretension of ease unassociated with riches. In what a profound philosophy was it, then, that Diogenes rolled his tub about the streets! there was a mock purpose in the act that must have flattered his fellow-citizens. I feel assured that a great deal of the butterfly-hunting and beetle-gathering that we see around us is done in this spirit. They are a set of idle folk anxious to indulge their indolence without reproach.

Thus pondering and musing, I strolled back to the town. So still and silent was it, so free from all movement of traffic or business, that I was actually in the very centre of it without knowing it. There were streets without passengers, and shops without customers, and even cafés without guests, and I wondered within myself why people should thus congregate to do nothing, and I rambled on from street to alley, and from alley to lane, never chancing upon one who had anything on hand. At last I gained the side of the lake, along which a little quay ran for some distance, ending in a sort of terraced walk, now grass-grown and neglected. There were at least the charms of fresh air and scenery here, though the worthy citizens seemed to hold them cheaply, and I rambled along to the end, where, by a broad flight of steps, the terrace communicated with the lake; a spot,

doubtless, where, once on a time, the burghers took the water and went out a pleasureing with fat fräus and fräuleins. I had reached the end, and was about to turn back again, when I caught sight of a man seated on one of the lower steps, employed in watching two little toy ships which he had just launched. Now this seemed to me the very climax of indolence, and I sat myself down on the parapet to observe him. His proceedings were indeed of the strangest, for as there was no wind to fill the sails and his vessels lay still and becalmed, he appeared to have bethought him of another mode to impart interest to them. He weighted one of them with little stones till she brought her gunwale level with the water, and then pressing her gently with his hand he made her sink slowly down to the bottom. I'm not quite certain whether I laughed outright, or that some exclamation escaped me as I looked, but some noise I must unquestionably have made, for he started and turned up his head, and I saw Harpar, the Englishman whom I had met the day before at Constance.

"Well, you're not much the wiser after all," said he, gruffly, and without ever saluting me.

There was in the words, and the fierce expression of his face, something that made me suspect him of insanity, and I would willingly have retired without reply had he not risen and approached me.

"Eh," repeated he, with a sneer, "ain't I right? You can make nothing of it?"

"I really don't understand you!" said I. "I came down here by the merest accident, and never was more astonished than to see you."

"Oh, of course; I am well used to that sort of thing," went he on in the same tone of scoff. "I've had some experience of these kinds of accidents before; but, as I said, it's no use, you're not within one thousand miles of it, no, nor any man in Europe."

It was quite clear to me now that he *was* mad, and my only care was to get speedily clear of him.

"I'm not surprised," said I, with an assumed ease—"I'm not surprised at your having taken to so simple an amusement, for really in a place so dull as this any mode of passing the time would be welcome."

"Simple enough when you know it," said he, with a peculiar look.

"You arrived last night, I suppose?" said I, eager to get conversation into some pleasanter channel.

"Yes, I got here very late. I had the misfortune to sprain my ankle, and this detained me a long time on the way, and may keep me for a couple of days more."

I learned where he was stopping in the town, and seeing with what pain and difficulty he moved, I offered him my aid to assist him on his way.

"Well, I'll not refuse your help," said he, dryly; "but just go along yonder, about five and-twenty or thirty yards, and I'll join you. You understand me, I suppose?"

Now, I really did not understand him, except to believe him perfectly insane, and to suggest to me the notion of profiting by his lameness to make my escape with all speed. I conclude some generous promptings opposed this course, for I obeyed his injunctions to the very letter, and waited till he came up to me. He did so very slowly, and evidently in much suffering, assisted by a stick in one hand, while he carried his two little boats in the other.

"Shall I take charge of these for you?" said I, offering to carry them.

"No, don't trouble yourself," said he, in the same rude tone. "Nobody touches these but myself."

I now gave him my arm, and we moved slowly along.

"What has become of the vagabonds? Are they here with you?" asked he, abruptly.

"I parted with them yesterday," said I, shortly, and not wishing to enter into further explanations.

"And you did wisely," rejoined he, with a serious air. "Even when these sort of creatures have nothing very bad about them, they are bad company, out of the haphazard chance way they gain a livelihood. If you reduce life to a game, you must yourself become a gambler. Now, there's one feature of that sort of existence intolerable to an honest man: it is, that to win himself, some one else must lose. Do you understand me?"

"I do, and am much struck by what you say."

"In that case," said he, with a nudge of his elbow against my side—"in that case you might as well have not come down to watch me!"

I protested stoutly against this mistake, but I could plainly perceive with very little success.

"Let it be, let it be," said he, with a shake of the head. "As I said before, if you saw the thing done before your eyes you'd make nothing of it. I'm not afraid of you, or all the men in Europe! There now, there's a challenge to the whole of ye! Sit down every man of ye, with the problem before ye, and see what you'll make of it."

"Ah," thought I, "this is madness. Here is a poor monomaniac led away into the land of wild thoughts and fancies by one dominating caprice; who knows whether out of the realm of this delusion he may not be a man acute and sensible?"

"No, no," muttered he, half aloud; "there are, maybe, half a million of men this moment manufacturing steam-engines; but it took one head, just one head, to set them all a working, and if it wasn't for old Watt, the world at this day wouldn't be five miles in advance of what it was a century back. I see," added he, after a moment, "you don't take much interest in these sort of things. Your line of parts, is the walking gentleman, eh? Well, bear in mind it don't pay; no, sir, it don't pay! Here, this is my way; my lodging is down this lane. I'll not ask you to come further; thank you for your help, and good-by."

"Let us not part here; come up to the inn and dine with me," said I, affecting his own blunt and abrupt manner.

"Why should *I* dine with *you*?" asked he, roughly.

"I can't exactly say," stammered I, "except out of good-fellowship, just as, for instance, I accepted your invitation t'other morning to breakfast."

"Ah, yes, to be sure, so you did. Well, I'll come. We shall be all alone, I suppose?"

"Quite alone."

"All right, for I have no coat but this one!" and he looked down at the coarse sleeve as he spoke, with a strange and sad smile, and then waving his hand in token of farewell, he said, "I'll join you in half an hour," and disappeared up the lane.

I have already owned that I did not like this man; he had a certain short abrupt way that repelled me at every moment. When he differed in opinion with me, he was not satisfied to record his dissent, but he must set about demolishing my conviction, and this sort of intolerance pervaded all he said. There was, too, that business-like, practical tone about him, that jars fearfully on the sensitive fibre of the idler's nature.

It was exactly in proportion as his society was distasteful to me, that I felt a species of pride in associating with him, as though to say, "I am not one of those who must be fawned on and flattered. I am of a healthier and manlier stamp; I can afford to hear my judgments arraigned, and my opinions opposed." And in this humour I ascended the stairs of the hotel, and entered the room where our table was already laid out.

To compensate, so far as they could, for the rude reception of the day before, they had given me now the "grand apartment" of the inn, which, by a long balcony, looked over the lake, and that fine mountain range that leads to the Splügen pass. A beautiful bouquet of freshflowers ornamented the centre of the small dinner-table, tastily decked with Bohemian glass, and napkins with lace borders. I rather liked this little display of elegance. It was a sort ofally on my side against the utilitarian plainness of my guest.

As I walked up and down the room, awaiting his arrival, I could not help a sigh, and a very deep one too, over the thought of what had been my enjoyment that moment if my guest had been one of a different temperament—a man willing to take me on my own showing, and ready to accept any version I should like to give of myself. How gracefully, how charmingly I could have played the host to such a man! What vigour would it have imparted to my imagination—what brilliancy to my fancy! With what a princely grace might I have dispensed my hospitalities, as though such occasions were the daily habit of my life; whereas a dinner with Harper would be nothing more or less than an airing with a "slave in the chariot"—a perpetual reminder, like the face of a poor relation, that my lot was cast in an humble sphere, and it was no use trying to disguise it.

"What's all this for?" said Harpar's harsh

voice, as he entered the room. "Why didn't you order our mutton-chop below stairs in the common room, and not a banquet in this fashion? You must be well aware I couldn't do this sort of thing by *you*. Why then have you attempted it with *me*?"

"I have always thought it was a host's prerogative," said I, meekly, "to be the arbiter of his own entertainment."

"So it might where he was the arbiter of his purse, but you know well enough neither you nor I have any pretension to these costly ways, and they have this disadvantage, that they make all intercourse stilted and unnatural. If you and I had to sit down to table, dressed in court suits, with wigs and bags, ain't it likely we'd be easy and cordial together? Well, this is precisely the same."

"I am really sorry," said I, with a forced appearance of courtesy, "to have incurred so severe a lesson, but you must allow me this one transgression before I begin to profit by it." And so saying, I rang the bell and ordered dinner.

Harpar made no reply, but walked the room, with his hands deep in his pockets, humming a tune to himself as he went.

At last we sat down at table; everything was excellent and admirably served, but we ate on in silence, not a syllable exchanged between us. As the dessert appeared I tried to open conversation. I affected to seem easy and unconcerned, but the cold half stern look of my companion repelled all my attempts, and I sat very sad and much discouraged sipping my wine.

"May I order some brandy-and-water? I like it better than these French wines," asked he, abruptly; and, as I arose to ring for it, he added, "and you'll not object to my having a pipe of strong Cavendish?" And therewith he produced a leather bag and a very much smoked meerschaum, short and ungainly as his own figure. As he thrust his hand into the pouch, a small boat, about the size of a lady's thimble, rolled out from amidst the tobacco, and he quickly took it and placed it in his waistcoat-pocket—the act being done with a sort of hurry that with a man of less self-possession might have perhaps evinced confusion.

"You fancy you've seen something, don't you?" said he, with a defiant laugh. "I'd wager a five-pound note, if I had one, that you think at this moment you have made a great discovery. Well, there it is, make much of it!" As he spoke, he produced the little boat and laid it down before me. I own that this speech and the act convinced me that he was insane; I was aware that intense suspectfulness is the great characteristic of madness, and everything tended to show that he was deranged.

Rather to conceal what was passing in my own mind than out of any curiosity, I took up the little toy to examine it. It was beautifully made, and finished with a most perfect neatness; the only thing I could not understand being four small holes on each side of the keel, fastened by four little plugs.

"What are these for?" asked I.

"Can't you guess?" said he, laughingly.

"No; I have never seen such before."

"Well," said he, musingly, "perhaps they are puzzling—I suppose they are. But mayhap, too, if I thought you'd guess the meaning, I'd not have been so ready to show it to you." And with this he replaced the boat in his pocket and smoked away. "You ain't a genius, my worthy friend, that's a fact," said he, sententiously.

"I opine that the same judgment might be passed upon a great many?" said I, testily.

"No," continued he, following on his own thoughts without heeding my remark, "you'll not set the Thames a-fire."

"Is that the best test of a man's ability?" asked I, sneeringly.

"You're the sort of fellow that ought to be—let us see now what you ought to be—yes, you're just the scamp of man for an apothecary."

"You are so charming in your frankness," said I, "that you almost tempt me to imitate you."

"And why not? sure we oughtn't to talk to each other like two devils in waiting. Out with what you have to say."

"I was just thinking," said I—"led to it by that speculative turn of yours—I was just thinking in what station *your* abilities would have pre-eminently distinguished you."

"Well, have you hit it?"

"I'm not quite certain," said I, trying to screw up my courage for an impertinence, "but I half suspect that in our great national works—our lines of railroad, for instance—there must be a strong infusion of men with tastes and habits resembling yours."

"You mean the navvies?" broke he in. "You're right, I was a navvy once; I turned the first spadeful of earth on the Coppleshaw Junction, and, seeing what a good thing might be made of it, I suggested task-work to my comrades, and we netted from four-and-six to five shillings a day, each. In eight months after, I was made an inspector: so that you see strong sinews can be good allies to a strong head and a stout will."

I do not believe that the most angry rebuke, the most sarcastic rejoinder, could have covered me with tenth part of the shame and confusion than did these few quiet words. I'd have given worlds, if I had them, to make a due reparation for my rudeness, but I knew not how to accomplish it. I looked in his face to read if I might hit upon some trait by which his nature could be approached; but I might as well have gazed at a line of railroad to guess the sort of town that it led to. The stern, rugged, bold countenance seemed to imply little else than daring and determination, and I could not but wonder how I had ever dared to take a liberty with one of his stamp.

"Well," said I, at last, and wishing to lead him back to his story, "and after being made inspector——"

"You can speak German well," said he, totally inattentive to my question; "just ask

one of these people when there will be any conveyance from this to Ragatz."

"Ragatz of all places!" exclaimed I.

"Yes; they tell me it's good for the rheumatics, and I have got some old shoulder pains I'd like to shake off before winter. And then this sprain too: I foresee I shall not be able to walk much for some days to come."

"Ragatz is on my road; I'm about to cross the Splügen into Italy; I'll bear you company so far, if you have no objection."

"Well, it may not seem civil to say it, but I have an objection," said he, rising from the table. "When I've got weighty things on my mind I've a bad habit of talking of them to myself aloud. I can't help it, and so I keep strictly alone till my plans are all fixed and settled; after that, there's no danger of my revealing them to any one. There now, you have my reason, and you'll not dispute that it's a good one."

"You may not be too distrustful of yourself," said I, laughing, "but assuredly you are far too flattering in your estimate of *my* acuteness."

"I'll not risk it," said he, bluntly, as he sought for his hat.

"Wait a moment," said I. "You told me at Constance that you were in want of money; at the time I was not exactly in funds myself. Yesterday, however, I received a remittance, and if ten or twenty pounds be of any service, they are heartily at your disposal."

He looked at me fixedly, almost sternly, for a minute or two, and then said,

"Is this true, or is it that you have changed your mind about me?"

"True," said I—"strictly true."

"Will this loan—I mean it to be a loan—inconvenience you much?"

"No, no; I make you the offer freely."

"I take it, then. Let me have ten pounds; and write down there an address where I am to remit it some day or other, though I can't say when."

"There may be some difficulty about that," said I. "Stay! I mean to be at Rome some time in the winter; send it to me there."

"To what banker?"

"I have no banker, I never had a banker. There's my name, and let the post-office be the address."

"Whichever way you're bent on going you're not on the road to be a rich man," said Harpar, as he deposited my gold in his leather purse; "but I hope you'll not lose by me. Good-by." He gave me his hand, not very warmly or cordially either, and was gone ere I well knew it.

CHARLES DICKENS.—It should be remembered that all the writings of Charles Dickens are prepared for and first make their appearance in ALL THE YEAR ROUND. His "Tale of Two Cities" appeared in the 1st and 2d volumes, "Journeys of the Uncommercial Traveler" in the 3d, and the new novel, "Great Expectations," will appear in the 4th, commencing in the monthly part for February, 1861.

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